

**JEWISH CHAPLAINCY IN THE BRITISH ARMED FORCES,  
FROM ITS INCEPTION IN 1892 UNTIL THE PRESENT DAY**

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I, Jonathan Malcolm Lewis, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

(signed) Jonathan Malcolm Lewis

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## ABSTRACT

Only during the last two decades has the entire subject of the interface of war, faith and religion begun to receive scholarly attention. Research has not until now extended to the thesis topic of British Jewish military chaplaincy. The thesis is therefore based largely upon original research, locating material from a broad spectrum of sources, publicly available and private, to form a coherent narrative of British Jewish chaplaincy from its inception in 1892 until the present day.

The thesis seeks to understand Jewish chaplaincy as a product of larger social and institutional change and to contextualise it within broader interpretations by leading contemporary historians of British Jewish history and of Jewish military history. It argues that the initiative for the creation and development of Jewish chaplaincy in the British armed forces derived at key points mainly from the British Jewish community through its representative bodies and from some individuals, with the governmental and military authorities in a generally supportive but essentially reactive role. It also argues that during both world wars in the frequent inevitable absence of an official chaplain what might be termed unofficial chaplaincy by Jewish soldiers facilitating spiritual support and religious observance for themselves and others was of real significance.

## IMPACT STATEMENT

Nineteenth century Britain witnessed a slow, peaceful and incremental process of civic emancipation of its two identifiable religious minority groups, Roman Catholics and Jews. Parliament, public bodies, the professions and the universities, their history and identity embedded in Anglicanism, became obliged to acknowledge, address and accommodate religious difference.

Within the military the appointment of chaplains is not the only way of accommodating religious difference, but it is the most tangible. Jewish chaplains, as well as Christian chaplains from denominations other than the established Church of England, personify religious difference and oblige the military to confront the practicalities of accommodating it. Since the Napoleonic Wars Jews had served in small numbers in the Navy and the Army. In steps small in scope but large in consequence, the Army appointed its first civilian Jewish chaplain in 1892 and its first commissioned Jewish chaplain in 1909. It became obliged to recognise and accommodate Jewish difference from 1914, and again, consolidating that experience, from 1939. Derek Penslar writes that in any country Jewish military chaplains were a bellwether of Jewish acceptance within the army as a whole.<sup>1</sup> The development of Jewish military chaplaincy in Britain may be viewed in terms of a core national institution, the armed forces, acknowledging, addressing and accommodating religious difference and adapting in times of peace and war to a gradually emerging religious and cultural diversity within wider society.

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<sup>1</sup> I discuss this in section 2.3.

As stated, very little has been written on Jewish chaplaincy in the British armed forces, of which this research is the first holistic treatment. It addresses lacunae in the large literature on British military chaplaincy and in the historiography of British Jewry in the twentieth century. Whilst after some six years of part time research I believe it to be as comprehensive as the accessible sources allow, it may form a baseline for further research by others. I hope to write a book which will fill those lacunae and which I would expect to generate interest in military chaplaincy and British-Jewish historical circles.

## IN GRATITUDE

I have been privileged throughout my research to enjoy the enthusiastic support and provision of material by very many people, including serving and retired chaplains, families of chaplains, people with memories of chaplains and people knowledgeable about chaplaincy. These include the members of an interest group on military chaplaincy which confers annually at the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre in Hampshire, whose experience and expertise have been of invaluable assistance to me. I have also derived considerable help from various institutions too numerous to list. The commitment and enthusiasm of my volunteer research assistants Corinne White and Sandra Clark has been second to none. I am immeasurably indebted to them all.

Within the embrace of the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at University College London I have been outstandingly supported by my supervisor, Professor Michael Berkowitz, who has guided me in historical methodology, and by the Departmental Graduate Tutor, Dr. François Guesnet.

Commenced in 2014, this project became in 2016 the preoccupation of my ostensible retirement. I could not have carried it through without my wife Rosemary, whose devotion to facilitating it has been without limit. Her secretarial role too has been substantial. I stand in her debt, and in that of my ever-supportive family.

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## 1. AN OUTLINE OF BRITISH JEWISH MILITARY CHAPLAINCY<sup>1</sup>

My thesis is a history of Jewish chaplaincy in the British Armed Forces. It seeks to interweave it into the history of the British Jewish community, British military chaplaincy and twentieth century military history.

In the nineteenth century soldiers<sup>2</sup> were listed in British Army records as Church of England, Nonconformists or “Other Religions”. During that century Roman Catholicism came to be recognised and Roman Catholic chaplains were appointed.<sup>3</sup> Two soldiers, Colonel Albert Goldsmid and Private Woolf Cohen, separately sought military recognition of Jewish identity.<sup>4</sup> Their efforts led to Queen’s Regulations being changed in 1886 to specify for the first time that Judaism was recognised for the purposes of public worship in the armed forces and that Jews were permitted to be classified separately as a distinct religious body. Religious ministrations to Jews was initiated in 1892 by Rev. Francis Lyon Cohen (1862-1934), with weekly Jewish services at Aldershot Camp and from 1893 annual Chanukah services. During the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 Cohen conducted from London a large correspondence with serving Jewish soldiers and their families. Cohen remained a civilian. In 1905 he left for Australia, and his role was assumed by Rev. Michael

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<sup>1</sup> I append bibliographical information in the footnotes (rather than in the bibliography alone) in sections 1 to 5 in order to avoid incessant cross-referencing.

<sup>2</sup> To avoid endless repetition I use the term “soldiers” to include all those in any of the numerous branches of the armed forces and the term “servicemen” to include servicewomen.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Snape, *The Royal Army Chaplains’ Department 1796-1953 Clergy under Fire* (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester, New York: The Boydell Press, 2008), pp. 66-67, 359-360 (henceforth Snape, *Clergy under Fire*).

<sup>4</sup> I discuss this in section 7.2.

Adler (1868-1944), who with the creation of a new Territorial Force became in 1909 the first commissioned British Jewish chaplain.<sup>5</sup>

Jewish chaplaincy had to establish itself within the longstanding chaplaincy structure of the British Army and to operate within that structure during both world wars. In August 1914 Adler remained the sole Jewish chaplain in the British Army. He pressed to serve on the western front and did so for most of the First World War. He innovated and to an extent directed the development of Jewish chaplaincy in the field. By the end of the war there were the nineteen British and, under effective British chaplaincy direction, three Australian Jewish chaplains, as well as one locally engaged Rabbi in Alexandria, between them serving at the Dardanelles, in Egypt and Palestine and on the Western, Italian and Salonika fronts. None was killed, although one was injured and hospitalised.<sup>6</sup> An evangelist for the Jewish contribution to the war effort, Adler recorded and memorialised it after the war. During the interwar period there were continuing chaplaincy arrangements.<sup>7</sup>

Formed in 1918, the Royal Air Force had little historical tradition and a more egalitarian culture than the other services. Many Jews volunteered for it in the Second World War, and it incorporated Jewish chaplaincy into its chaplaincy structure. During that war fifty-six Jewish chaplains, according to my researches, including twelve locally recruited in Palestine, served in the British Army and the Royal Air Force in numerous theatres around the world. Three of the chaplains died

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<sup>5</sup> I discuss this in section 7.

<sup>6</sup> I discuss this in section 9.

<sup>7</sup> I discuss this in section 10.

whilst serving, although not through enemy action. Another, Rev. Isaac Levy (1910-2005), was briefly captured in North Africa but escaped.<sup>8</sup>

Proud of its strong historical tradition as the “Senior Service”, the Royal Navy was traditionally intolerant of religious dissent and limited entry, at least officially, to those of British nationality whose parents had been born in Britain. In the nineteenth century “Any Jew who found himself in the Royal Navy hid his religion; if revealed, it would be treated with contempt, suspicion, aversion.”<sup>9</sup> The Royal Navy has always had fewer Jews; for example, of some fifty thousand British Jews who served in the First World War, only about one thousand served in the Royal Navy.<sup>10</sup> Royal Navy chaplaincy was always the preserve of the Church of England, and until at least the start of the First World War no commissions were given to clergy from other churches.<sup>11</sup> To this day the Royal Navy has had no Jewish naval chaplain. In 1944 the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean did seek a Jewish chaplain, but without success.<sup>12</sup>

Within the armed forces ministers of religion commissioned as chaplains are referred to as “chaplain” or “padre”. For Jews “Jewish chaplain” is the normative term. The work of commissioned chaplains has long been supplemented by a network of civilian “officiating clergymen” throughout the UK appointed by the authorities to minister to troops of their denomination who were stationed in their local area. During

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<sup>8</sup> I discuss this in section 11.

<sup>9</sup> Geoffrey L. Green, *The Royal Navy and Anglo-Jewry 1740-1820. Traders and those who served* (London: Geoffrey Green and The Self Publishing Association, 1989), p. 52. One could “find oneself” in the Royal Navy through being press-ganged.

<sup>10</sup> Green, *Royal Navy*, pp. 8, 52, 54. See also sections 7.7. and 9.6.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Howson, *Muddling Through. The Organisation of British Army Chaplaincy in World War One* (Solihull, West Midlands: Helion & Company, 2013), pp. 69, 96.

<sup>12</sup> Diary of Rev. Isaac Levy, vol. 3, p. 104 (henceforth LD3, p. 104, etc). I discuss this in section 11.13.

both world wars there were Jewish civilian officiating clergymen.<sup>13</sup> The terminology of chaplaincy can however be confusing as, especially during the Second World War, civilian ministers were often referred to as “officiating chaplains”. Rev. Francis Cohen, although a civilian, seems to have been described on his appointment in 1892 as the Jewish Officiating Chaplain to the Forces and Chaplain to the Volunteer Force and from 1903 as an Officiating Jewish Chaplain and simply as a Jewish Chaplain. Commissioned chaplains were paid as serving members of the armed forces. I have not encountered any suggestion that Cohen received any remuneration, and in 1906 the authorities refused a request for remuneration by Rev. Michael Adler, then also a civilian, who had been appointed to succeed him.<sup>14</sup> I have not been able to ascertain whether officiating clergymen serving in wartime received any remuneration or perhaps expenses.

Large numbers of Jews served in both world wars and after the Second World War performed national service. There were Army and RAF chaplains in the days of national service and then in the era of voluntary service. Currently there are estimated to be several hundred Jews in the British armed forces, those who identify participating in the Armed Forces Jewish Community, and there are three Jewish army chaplains.<sup>15</sup>

Francis Cohen, Michael Adler and many of the Jewish chaplains who were to follow them were self-motivated men who with scant guidance created the reality of Jewish chaplaincy. The First World War model of British field chaplaincy, with commissioned military chaplains accompanying the troops everywhere and sharing in their

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<sup>13</sup> I discuss this in sections 9.30. and 11.3.

<sup>14</sup> I discuss this in sections 7.4., 7.7. and 7.9.

<sup>15</sup> I discuss this in section 12.

privations, became and has remained the paradigm for Jewish chaplaincy within the English speaking world of Britain, the Commonwealth and the United States.

My thesis examines two specific issues. The first is the source of the initiative for the creation and development of Jewish Chaplaincy in the British military. I argue that at various key points the initiative derived mainly although not invariably from the British Jewish community through its representative bodies and indeed from individuals, with the military and governmental authorities in a generally supportive but essentially reactive role.

The second issue relates to what might be termed unofficial chaplaincy. In both World Wars there were never remotely enough Jewish chaplains for numerous and vast theatres of war, nor from the small British Jewish community could there ever have been. So soldiers who were conscious of their Judaism were largely left to their own spiritual resources, with sometimes one Jewish soldier facilitating spiritual support and religious observance for others as well as for himself. I examine how significant was this form of spiritual ministrations. Whilst there is no measure for evaluating it qualitatively or quantitatively alongside official chaplaincy by commissioned chaplains who were ordained ministers of religion, I argue by evidence that such unofficial chaplaincy was frequently the only form which was available and was of real significance.

The history of British Jewish chaplaincy divides into five phases: 1892 until 1914, the First World War and its aftermath, the interwar period, the Second World War and its aftermath, and 1946 until the present day. The first three represented the innovation of Jewish chaplaincy: successively its creation, in wartime and in peacetime. The last two represented essentially the consolidation of that experience, again in wartime

and then in peacetime. My treatment of the first three phases is therefore essentially linear, whilst that of the fourth and fifth is more selective. I have therefore dealt with some theatres of war more fully than others, and the First World War more fully than the Second. My thesis has elements of biography and of social, political and military history but essentially treats the subject of Jewish chaplaincy as cultural history, of Jewish ministers adapting to military life and being accommodated by the military and of Jewish soldiers seeking to maintain a degree of Jewish identity and observance.

A motivating factor for my interest in Jewish chaplaincy was the chance discovery in 2012 at Pinner United Synagogue of the memorial board to ten members of the former Jewish community of nearby Harrow, including the minister, chaplain Rev. Solly Hooker, who lost their lives whilst serving in the armed forces in the Second World War.<sup>16</sup> I and others researched their wartime service, located all of their ten families and arranged a meeting to commemorate them on Remembrance Sunday of 2012. This event exemplified the importance to a minority group of memory and commemoration.

I began my research in 2014, which coincided with the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War and the initiation of a national programme of education and commemoration. My research similarly coincided with a further evaluation of the role of British Jewry in the First World War and the renewed commemoration of that role.

The evaluation of the wartime role of British Jewry was epitomised by Tony Kushner in an important book chapter in 2017 entitled *Memory, Storytelling and Minorities; A Case*

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<sup>16</sup> I mention Rev. Hooker at sections 11.2., 11.13. and 11.20. and illustrations 11 and 12.



*Study of Jews in Britain and the First World War*.<sup>17</sup> “A century on from the First World War and we are at a key stage of restoring a past diversity that for many years has been regarded as either embarrassing or of no particular significance or value, other than to the minority groups concerned”, Kushner wrote.<sup>18</sup> “Thus for migrant groups especially, great energy has been expended in recovering and celebrating military contributions to the 'host' nation, whether in the recent or distant past. Underlying such efforts has been a desire to prove the right to belong and to partake equally in post-war social, political and economic settlements.”<sup>19</sup> “Perhaps the strongest myth that appears throughout the confrontation of war and minorities is that of the Damnosa Hereditas, or 'martial race' theory. ... 'a feeling that certain ethnic groups made 'good' soldiers while others had shown their loyalty to be unreliable grew from a hunch into a principle'.<sup>20</sup> 'Each nationality evolves its own type of soldier... As troops ... are the counterpart of the nations from which they spring... so they must... reveal in fighting the particular sort of martial spirit possessed by their race.' ”<sup>21</sup> The *British Jewry Book of Honour* “was a clear example of what has been labelled the 'emancipation contract' between Jews and British state and society.<sup>22</sup> 'Jews were validated not on the grounds of their Jewish identity, but on the basis of their conformity to the values and manners of bourgeois English society'. Nowhere more obviously were these values to be expressed by patriotism and service during war.”<sup>23</sup> “... the urgent need for ethnic minorities to gain or

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<sup>17</sup> Hannah Ewence and Tim Grady (eds.), *From War to Peace* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017): Tony Kushner, *Memory, Storytelling and Minorities: A Case Study of Jews in Britain and the First World War*, pp. 227-251. I consider this further in section 3.1.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*, p. 228.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*, p. 230.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*, p. 231.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*, p. 231.

<sup>22</sup> I discuss the *British Jewry Book of Honour* in section 10.1.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*, p. 238.

retain citizenship rights and wider social acceptance ... reflects what Bill Williams argues has been the 'informal mechanisms of liberal toleration'. Such conditional acceptance, Williams concludes, 'remain[s] the quintessential means by which British society accommodates ethnic minorities' ".<sup>24 25</sup>

Until 2014 the First World War tended to have been eclipsed in popular consciousness, for people generally by the Second World War and for Jewish people specifically by the Holocaust. For many people the effects of those more recent events upon them and their families is still close enough to resonate. The centenary of the outbreak of the First World War afforded the opportunity for the Jewish community to educate itself about the part which British Jewry had played in the First World War.

Two communal initiatives exemplify Kushner's identification of the recovery and celebration of the military contributions of the minority group to the 'host' nation and of the importance of memory. The first is a booklet published by the United Synagogue<sup>26</sup> in 2014 entitled *100 Years Ago ... Remembering World War One*.<sup>27</sup> The First World War, it wrote, sowed the seeds of the Holocaust and of the utter upheaval of Jewish life on the Continent:

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, p. 240. A.J.Kidd and K.W.Roberts (eds.), *City, Class and Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985): Bill Williams, *The Anti-Semitism of Tolerance: Middle-Class Manchester and the Jews, 1870-1900*, p.94.

<sup>25</sup> My supervisor, Professor Berkowitz, has strongly suggested that I pursue some of the sources cited by Kushner, which I will do when I can access them, especially Anthony Smith, *War and ethnicity: the role of warfare in the formation, self-images and cohesion of ethnic communities* in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 4:4 (October 1981), 375, and Geoff Eley, *Foreword*, in Martin Evans and Ken Lunn (eds), *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), p. ix.

<sup>26</sup> I discuss the United Synagogue in section 6.3.

<sup>27</sup> The United Synagogue, *100 Years Ago ...Remembering World War One*. 2014.

But there is another parallel and more optimistic British Jewish story – that of proud service and sacrifice for King and country; and of exemplary commitment and citizenship. ...

But even our history [of military service] in the British Forces goes back over three hundred years. ...

Later, during World War Two, out of a Jewish population in Britain estimated at only 400,000, approximately 60,000 Jewish men and women served in all three services of the British Armed Forces.<sup>28</sup> As in World War One, British Jews bore more than their full share of the War effort in operations around the globe - on sea, land, and in the air. They continued to do so in later conflicts including Malaya, Kenya, Korea, Northern Ireland, the Falklands, Iraq and Afghanistan. ...

Jewish military chaplaincy in the British Armed Forces under the authority of the Chief Rabbi, has been the sustaining spiritual force behind distinguished Jewish service for nearly 120 years.<sup>29</sup>

The second initiative is a website entitled “British Jews in the First World War. We Were There Too. Documenting and commemorating the contribution British Jews made during the First World War. A unique cross community project created to capture, record and preserve the impact, experience and contribution of Britain’s Jewish communities during the First World War era.” The website consolidates a growing wealth of material including many personal records and archives, the *British Jewry Book of Honour* in digitised form and an article by myself on Jewish chaplaincy. The project has an educational programme, including educational resources designed

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<sup>28</sup> In section 11.1. I cite estimates of 350,000 and 65,000 respectively.

<sup>29</sup> pp. 13-15.

to support the contemporary educational requirements of British Values, and has arranged visits to the battlefields of Ypres and the Somme in which I participated.

Senior Jewish Chaplain Marks Gollop (1888-1950), who had served as a chaplain in the First World War and was to serve as Senior Jewish Chaplain through much of the Second, summarised in his annual report for 1930 the role of Jewish chaplaincy. His words characterise the whole history of British Jewish chaplaincy.

We share the sorrows as well as the joys of our flock, and by means of correspondence, I try to enter into the lives of the men who cannot be reached by personal contact. And perhaps we may claim the unique experience of ministering to a congregation, whose members, although widely scattered over many parts of the globe on sea and land, yet receive most of, if not all, the privileges and services to which any member of an organised Jewish community is entitled.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> LMA, ACC/2712/01/082, pp.183-184.

## 2. THE STATE OF SCHOLARSHIP

### 2.1. Jews and the Military

Two sets of historically contiguous events – the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel on the one hand, and the 1967 Middle East War and the anti-Vietnam War movement on the other – blotted the Jewish soldier out of Jewish collective memory. .... From the 1970s onward, Jewish historical writing in North America steadfastly neglected Jewish soldiers. Meanwhile, in Israel scholars usually considered the diaspora Jewish soldier to be too inconsequential for serious attention.

The Jewish soldier in the diaspora deserves to be rescued from oblivion and subjected to serious historical study. ....

Before the establishment of the state of Israel Jews had a long history of engagement with military power.<sup>1</sup>

*Jews and the Military, A History* by Professor Derek J. Penslar is therefore a ground breaking work. It addresses for the first time the role of Jews in the military forces of their various countries holistically rather than nationally. Its themes include fighting for rights - conscription and Jewish emancipation; the military as a Jewish occupation; the wars in which Jews were called upon to fight Jews; the Jewish dimensions of both World Wars; and global aspects of the War of Independence of

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<sup>1</sup> Derek J. Penslar, *Jews and the Military* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 1-2; reviewed by myself in *Jewish Historical Studies, Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* (henceforth "JHS"), vol. 46, 2014, pp. 170-173.

Israel in 1948. The fact that it was published as recently as 2013 evidences the long historical neglect of this topic.

## 2.2. The Role of the Individual

Most people, including most Jews, who volunteered or were conscripted into the conflicts of the twentieth century no doubt set out in good faith and heart to serve their country. As generations imbued with an ethic of nationalism, duty, service and sacrifice, they wrote censored letters home and some wrote memoirs. Joanna Bourke has studied at the individual level the grim realities of soldiering, violence and killing in the twentieth century: “Throughout this book, ‘ordinary’ men and women have been heard rejoicing as they committed grotesque acts of cruelty.”<sup>2</sup> Timothy Snyder has analysed at the collective level how in the bloodlands between Berlin and Moscow in the middle of Europe in the middle of the twentieth century and within a period of twelve years the Nazi and Soviet regimes murdered as a result of deliberate policies unrelated to combat fourteen million people, the Nazis murdering predominantly citizens of other countries and the Soviets predominantly their own citizens.<sup>3</sup>

## 2.3. Military Chaplaincy

Conceptual themes such as the role of religion and faith in wartime and its integration into the structured conduct of warfare have only relatively recently come to be recognised as significant topics deserving of scholarly attention. Only in the last

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<sup>2</sup> Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face to Face Killing in Twentieth Century Warfare* (London: Granta, 1998) (henceforth “Bourke 1998”) including ch. 9 on priests and padres and p. 369; *Dismembering the Male. Men’s Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (London: The Bodley Head, 2010).

two decades has military chaplaincy begun to receive it, in Britain through the work of Peter Howson, Edward Madigan, Michael Snape and others.<sup>4</sup>

As to Jewish military chaplaincy, the religious, spiritual and practical concerns of Jewish soldiers of all nations in the twentieth century in wartime were, to the extent that they derived from their Judaism, essentially similar and universal. In order to address them Jewish chaplaincy in each country inevitably developed its own particular national character.<sup>5</sup> Derek Penslar writes that in any country Jewish military chaplains were a bellwether of Jewish acceptance within the army as a whole.<sup>6</sup> Sarah Panter has written of the institutionalisation of a Jewish chaplaincy in the First World War as a symbol of religious and civic equality.<sup>7</sup> Edward Madigan has written on the role of Rev. Michael Adler in articulating and memorialising the patriotism and military contribution of British Jewry in the First World War.<sup>8</sup>

These specifics apart, British Jewish military chaplaincy as a subject still awaits holistic attention. As recently as 2013, Snape and Madigan were able to write:

While these chapters provide many new insights into the experiences and significance of British army chaplains in the First World War, they also point to much wider agendas for future research. Although the Anglican,

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<sup>4</sup> I discuss this in section 3.3.

<sup>5</sup> I discuss this in section 8.

<sup>6</sup> Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, p.64.

<sup>7</sup> Edward Madigan and Gideon Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience of the First World War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019) (henceforth *The Jewish Experience*): Sarah Panter, *Between Inclusion and Exclusion - The Experiences of Jewish Soldiers in Europe and the USA, 1914-1918*, pp. 159-181 at 161, 175. I refer to this in section 3.4.

<sup>8</sup> Madigan and Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience*: Edward Madigan, *Thou Hast Given Us Home and Freedom, Mother England: Anglo-Jewish Gratitude, Patriotism and Service During and After the First World War*, pp. 307-333. I refer to this in sections 3.2.,3.4 and 6.8.

Nonconformist and Roman Catholic aspects of British army chaplaincy have now been well covered, further work is still required on the broader Presbyterian experience and on Jewish chaplaincy in particular.

Furthermore, the endeavours of religious welfare organizations such as the YMCA and the Church Army, through which the ministries of hundreds of other clergymen were exercised, have yet to receive the scholarly attention they undoubtedly merit.<sup>9</sup>

The subject of Jewish chaplaincy in Britain has not been addressed comprehensively, and there exist only a few memoirs by and articles about individual British Jewish chaplains.<sup>10</sup> In the United States too, US Navy Chaplain Albert Slomovitz in chronicling the histories of military Rabbis in 1999 observed the paucity and fragmented and unsystematic nature of existing scholarship.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Snape and Edward Madigan (eds.), *The Clergy in Khaki. New Perspectives on British Army Chaplaincy in the First World War* (Farnham and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), pp. 14-15. The Jewish-related role of the YMCA in the First World War is discussed in sections 3.4., 6.7., 9.5., 9.8., 9.17. and 9.22.4.

<sup>10</sup> I discuss this in section 3.4.

<sup>11</sup> Albert Isaac Slomovitz, *The Fighting Rabbis. Jewish Military Chaplains and American History*. (New York and London: New York University Press, 1999 and 2001). I refer to this in section 3.5



### 3. THE HISTORIOGRAPHY

As a field of study the interface of war, faith and religion is limited but growing and becoming more sophisticated, partially in the light of contemporary challenges such as are discussed by the military chaplaincy interest group which confers annually at the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre. I consider the historiography in relation to Jews in the British military, Jews in the military of other countries, British Christian chaplaincy (which was the background against which British Jewish chaplaincy came into being), British Jewish chaplaincy and Jewish chaplaincy in other countries.

#### 3.1. Jews in the British Military

There are a number of works on Jews in the British military. In an article in 1940, *Jews in the Defence of Britain – Thirteenth to Nineteenth Centuries*, Cecil Roth surveyed the participation of Jews in the army and the navy in Medieval England, Tudor times, the Resettlement, the Continental and Napoleonic Wars, the Colonies and the Crimea.<sup>1</sup> Strangely for its overt purpose, Roth stopped short of considering the Anglo-Boer War and the First World War of then living memory, relegating them to a footnote and contenting himself with saying that:

Once English Jewry was fully emancipated, it took its place, simply and naturally, by the side of other Englishman; *and in recent wars the proportion of Jews serving, the proportion of Jewish casualties, and the proportion of Jewish decorations has been slightly higher rather than lower than among the general population.*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> JHS, vol. 15, 1939-1945, pp. 1-29.

<sup>2</sup> My italics.

Inevitably the article is largely a record of the roles of individuals and sometimes families. Delivered as a paper “in this grim hour of crisis” in October 1940 and again in July 1941 and published in 1946, its purpose is clear. It states:

There is a widespread impression that in the centuries-long interval between the fall of Jerusalem and (shall I say?) the Balfour Declaration the Jews entirely lost the martial qualities that had once distinguished them. ... But they did not await emancipation. Like most extremely pacific persons, the Jew is a good fighting man, and he has never failed to demonstrate his devotion (not merely his loyalty) to this country on the battlefield when the opportunity has offered.

This is classic writing by Cecil Roth (1899-1970), the first reader in Jewish Studies at Oxford. The pre-eminent historian of British Jewry in the first half of the twentieth century, he alone addressed its history comprehensively. Writing at a time when the pressures of both wars bore in particular ways upon the position of Jews, he interpreted the history of British Jewry as a steady progression of committed, understated and ultimately successful integration into the host society. A contemporary historian, Geoffrey Alderman, who views British Jewry introspectively through the prism of the dynamics and tensions within communal organisations, described this as “the public-relations history that British Jewry had been accustomed to read hitherto, and of which (it must be said) Cecil Roth had been an accomplished exponent”.<sup>3</sup> There is currently a more positive reappraisal of Roth’s

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<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p.vii.

work, Roth's words which I have italicised being recognised as one example of its historical significance.<sup>4</sup>

Founded in 1895, the Jewish Lads' Brigade introduced many Jewish boys to military ways, and has been accorded a scholarly history by Sharman Kadish.<sup>5</sup> There are several works on each of the Jewish units: the Zion Mule Corps of 1915<sup>6</sup>, the Jewish Legion of 1918 to 1921<sup>7</sup> and the Jewish Brigade of 1944 to 1945.<sup>8</sup> After the First World War the first commissioned Jewish chaplain and later the Senior Jewish Chaplain of that war, Rev. Michael Adler, compiled the monumental *British Jewry Book of Honour*, recording in vast detail the military contribution of British Jews in the

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<sup>4</sup> E.g. JHS, 2014, vol. 46, pp. ix-x. Todd Endelman *The Jews of Britain 1656-2000* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2002) discusses at pp. 1-2 Roth's motivation.

<sup>5</sup> Sharman Kadish, *"A Good Jew and a Good Englishman": The Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade 1895-1995* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> These include: Peter Liddle, *Men of Gallipoli: the Dardanelles and the Gallipoli Experience August 1914 to January 1916* (first published 1976; Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1988), and *The Gallipoli Experience Reconsidered* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Military, 2015); J. H. Patterson, *With the Zionists in Gallipoli* (London: Hutchinson, 1916). I discuss this in section 9.22.2.

<sup>7</sup> These include: Roman Freulich, *Soldiers in Judea, Stories and Vignettes of the Jewish Legion* (New York: Herzl Press, 1964); Vladimir Jabotinsky, *The Story of the Jewish Legion* (New York: Bernard Ackerman, 1945); Michael Keren and Shlomit Keren, *We Are Coming, Unafraid. The Jewish Legions and the Promised Land in the First World War* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010); J. H. Patterson, *With the Judeans in the Palestine Campaign* (New York: The Macmillan Company, and London: Hutchinson, 1922); Martin Watts, *The Jewish Legion during the First World War* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). I discuss this in section 9.29.

<sup>8</sup> These include: Morris Beckman, *The Jewish Brigade An Army with Two Masters 1944-45* (Spellhurst, Kent: Spellmount, and New York: Sarpedon, 1998); Rabbi Yaakov (Jacob) Lipschitz, *Sefer Habrigada Hayehudit – a History of the Jewish Infantry Brigade Group* (Tel Aviv: Yavne, 1947, two Hebrew editions and possibly a third edition not in Hebrew). I discuss this in section 11.19.

Great War.<sup>9</sup> This was later imitated by Harold Boas, who served effectively as an Australian chaplain, in the *Australian Jewry Book of Honour*.<sup>10</sup>

There are narrative works by Geoffrey L. Green, *The Royal Navy and Anglo-Jewry 1740-1820. Traders and those who served* and an article taking the story of Jews in the Navy up to 1941.<sup>11</sup> *Portraying 'the Jew' in First World War Britain* by Alyson Pendlebury analyses ways in which in the light of politicised Christian themes and imagery Jews were depicted negatively in wartime and the nature of Jewish responses.<sup>12</sup> *War or Revolution, Russian Jews and Conscription in Britain, 1917* by Harold Shukman addresses the dilemma placed before thirty thousand émigré Russian Jews of military age in 1917 to enlist in the British Army for the western front with the promise of British citizenship, which some did, or to return to fight for Russia, which four thousand chose to do.<sup>13</sup>

In an essay entitled *Memory, Storytelling and Minorities: A Case Study of Jews in Britain and the First World War* Tony Kushner has written about memory as a route to group acceptance of minorities by their “host” nation. He writes that the two dominant themes of what he terms official Anglo-Jewish historiography have been to emphasise Jewish patriotism and to prove this loyalty through rootedness in British society. Discussing the “martial race theory” embraced by various minority groups he

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<sup>9</sup> *British Jewry Book of Honour*, Michael Adler (ed.) (London: Caxton, 1922) (henceforth “BJBH”), before which he published *The Jews of the Empire and the Great War* (London, New York, Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, for the Jewish War Services Committee, 1919). I discuss this in section 10.1.

<sup>10</sup> *Australian Jewry Book of Honour. The Great War 1914-1918*, Harold Boas (compiler) (Perth: privately published, 1923). I discuss this in sections 3.4. and 9.22.4.

<sup>11</sup> Green, *Royal Navy, and England Expects ...:British Jews under the white ensign from HMS Victory to the loss of HMS Hood in 1941* in JHS, vol.41 (2007), pp.63-97.

<sup>12</sup> Alyson Pendlebury, *Portraying 'the Jew' in First World War Britain* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Harold Shukman, *War or Revolution. Russian Jews and Conscription in Britain, 1917* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2006).

describes the *British Jewry Book of Honour* as part of this history and cites Mark Levene in saying that taking into account the thousands of Jews of Eastern European origin in Britain who for their own reasons wanted no part of the First World War as well as some Jewish pacifists would produce a different narrative of the Jewish wartime role. He describes Cecil Roth's paper in 1940 as a call to civic duty and an exercise in ethnic pride, "instrumentalising history" by constructing over the centuries an Anglo-Jewish military tradition and addressing the needs of the present at least as much as studying the past.<sup>14</sup>

As to the Second World War, *Jews in Uniform* by Michael Greisman contains concise biographies of military service, including those of two chaplains and of one officer who acted as a chaplain.<sup>15</sup> *We Will Remember Them* by Henry Morris and Martin Sugarman records the Jews who lost their lives.<sup>16</sup> Martin Sugarman is the archivist of the Association of Jewish Ex-servicemen and Women (AJEX). A foremost authority on Jews in the British military, he has for decades researched and documented a vast amount of material about Jews in the military, especially in the Second World War. He has published several books<sup>17</sup> and numerous articles in *Jewish Historical Studies*, *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*

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<sup>14</sup> Ewence and Grady (eds.), *From War to Peace* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Kushner, *Memory, Storytelling and Minorities: A Case Study of Jews in Britain and the First World War*, pp. 227-251, esp. 235-241. I have also discussed this in section 1.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Greisman, *Jews in Uniform* (Aster Publishing, 2018).

<sup>16</sup> Henry Morris and Martin Sugarman, *We Will Remember Them. A Record of the Jews who died in the Armed Forces of the Crown from 1939* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> Martin Sugarman, *Fighting Back, British Jewry's Military Contribution in the Second World War* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010); *Under the Heel of the Bushido – Last Voices of the Jewish POWs of the Japanese in the Second World War* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2014); *Jewish Participation in the Fire Service in the Second World War. Last Voices* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2016).

and elsewhere. Beyond a list in *Fighting Back* of Jewish Chaplains in both world wars<sup>18</sup> which is very useful to me, he has not addressed chaplaincy. His work is prodigiously researched and addresses a significant aspect of British Jewish history.

### 3.2. Jews in the Military of Other Countries <sup>19</sup>

From 1827 military conscription in Russia was for twenty-five years from the age of eighteen, sometimes preceded by the abduction of boys between the ages of twelve and eighteen to become military “cantonists” in training battalions. For Jews the effect was inevitably to sever conscripts for ever from Jewish life and observance. In 1856 the cantonist system ceased and conscription was reduced to six years.

*Conscription and the Search for Modern Russian Jewry* is a scholarly study by Olga Litvak of how the system of conscription became integrated and in various ways distorted into the narrative history of Russian Jewry.<sup>20</sup> In *Jews in the Russian Army 1827-1917, Drafted into Modernity* Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern addresses in a scholarly study the military experiences of the up to one and a half million Jews who served in the Russian army between the onset of conscription and the end of the Czarist regime.<sup>21</sup> Litvak concludes: “As the bearer or revolutionary Jewish consciousness, the foot soldier of the Jewish enlightenment emerged in the guise of a Soviet commissar.”<sup>22</sup> Through the work of Litvak and Petrovsky-Shtern and that of

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<sup>18</sup> Sugarman, *Fighting Back*, pp. 149-151.

<sup>19</sup> In this section I consider the literature in English dealing specifically with Jews and the military. Other works which address that subject within a broader context are referenced in the discussion of Jewish chaplaincy within the combatant nations of the First World War in section 8, which to avoid repetition further discusses some of the works mentioned in this section.

<sup>20</sup> Olga Litvak, *Conscription and the Search for Modern Russian Jewry* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), esp. pp. 3-4, 14-24.

<sup>21</sup> Yohanan Petrovsky-Stern, *Jews in the Russian Army, 1827-1917, Drafted into Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), esp. pp. 66-73, 191-196.

<sup>22</sup> Litvak, *Conscription*, p. 208.

Penslar<sup>23</sup> the significance of Jews in the Russian military before the Russian Revolution is coming to be better understood.

Approximately one hundred thousand Jews served in the German Army during the First World War on the Western, Eastern, Balkan and Ottoman Fronts, and some twelve thousand lost their lives. Their experiences are extensively addressed, in two scholarly works by Tim Grady, *The German Jewish Soldiers of the First World War in History and Memory* and *A Deadly Legacy. German Jews and the Great War*<sup>24</sup> and in an academic but less scholarly work by Peter Appelbaum, *Loyal Sons, Jews in the German Army in the Great War*.<sup>25</sup>

Edited by Edward Madigan and Gideon Reuveni, *The Jewish Experience of the First World War* includes five essays which I consider at different points below. They are: *Thou Hast Given Us Home and Freedom, Mother England: Anglo-Jewish Gratitude, Patriotism and Service During and After the First World War* by Edward Madigan; *Between Inclusion and Exclusion - The Experiences of Jewish Soldiers in Europe and the USA, 1914-1918* by Sarah Panter; *"The March of the Judeans": The London Recruits of the Jewish Battalion in the First World War* by Christopher Smith; *Between Faith and Nation: Italian Jewish Soldiers in the Great War* by Vanda Wilcox;

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<sup>23</sup> Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, pp. 27-34.

<sup>24</sup> Tim Grady, *The German Jewish Soldiers of the First World War in History and Memory* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011); *A Deadly Legacy. German Jews and the Great War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017).

<sup>25</sup> Peter C Appelbaum, *Loyal Sons: Jews in the German Army in the Great War* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2015); reviewed by Michael Berkowitz in *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, 16(3), 2017, pp. 518-519.

and *A Mixed bag of Loyalties: Jewish Soldiers, Ethnic Minorities, and State-Based Contingents in the German Army, 1914-1918* by Gavin Wiens.<sup>26</sup>

Jewish soldiers in the armies of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe during the First World War and the interwar years are the subject of two recent compilations of scholarly essays by different authors. That by Lamprecht and others includes essays on Austro-Hungarian Jewish Military Chaplains between East and West and on Hungarian Progressive Rabbis during the Great War.<sup>27</sup>

The Jewish experience in Australia is well researched in *Jewish Anzacs, Jews in the Australian Military* by Mark Dapin,<sup>28</sup> and that in Canada in the Second World War in *Double Threat. Canadian Jews, The Military and World War II* by Ellin Bessner.<sup>29</sup>

There are concise popular biographies of *140 Jewish Marshals, Generals & Admirals* of antiquity and from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries of fifteen countries.<sup>30</sup>

The development of political Zionism in the early part of the twentieth century created for young Jews a certain extra-national scope for quasi-militaristic activity.

Michael Berkowitz analyses how western political Zionism incorporated a masculine physical dimension of *Muskeljudentum* or “muscular Jewry”, whose leading advocate

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<sup>26</sup> Madigan and Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience*. Two of these essays relate to Britain, but it is convenient to cite them in this section. I consider various of these five essays at sections 2.3., 3.2., 3.4., 3.5., 6.8., 9.1., 9.4., 9.5., 9.29., 9.32. and 10.1.

<sup>27</sup> Gerald Lamprecht, Eleanore Lappin-Eppel and Ulrich Wyrwa (eds.), *Jewish Soldiers in the Collective Memory of Central Europe. The Remembrance of World War 1 from a Jewish Perspective* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, 2019), including the bibliography at pp. 9-13. Jason Crouthamel, Michael Geheran, Tim Grady and Julia Barbara Köhne (eds.), *Beyond Inclusion and Exclusion: Jewish Experiences of the First World War in Central Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019).

<sup>28</sup> Mark Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs, Jews in the Australian Military* (Sydney: New South Publishing, 2017).

<sup>29</sup> Ellin Bessner, *Double Threat. Canadian Jews, The Military and World War II* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: New Jewish Press, University of Toronto Press, 2018).

<sup>30</sup> E. Rubin, *140 Jewish Marshals, Generals & Admirals* (London: De Vero Books, 1952).



was Max Nordau. At a memorial service in Vienna in 1913 for the founder of the western political Zionist movement, Theodore Herzl, more than two thousand performers presented a gymnastic exhibition to more than twenty-five thousand spectators. During the First World War a German soldier called Hans Kohn created a virtual Zionist training camp and university within three prisoner of war camps in Siberia for hundreds of German Jewish prisoners of war.<sup>31</sup>

### 3.3. British Christian Chaplaincy

In relation to Christian chaplaincy in the British Armed Forces there is a large literature. Chaplains being “clerical” men of letters, this includes many memoirs. In *The Royal Army Chaplains Department 1796- 1953: Clergy under Fire and God and the British Soldier: Religion and the British Army in the First and Second World Wars (Christianity and Society in the Modern World)*<sup>32</sup> Michael Snape examines in a thorough and scholarly way the history and the role of religion and chaplaincy within the military. There are also scholarly studies: *The Clergy in Khaki. New Perspectives on British Army Chaplaincy in the First World War*, edited by Michael Snape and Edward Madigan<sup>33</sup>; *Faith Under Fire. Anglican Army Chaplains and the Great War* by Edward Madigan<sup>34</sup>; *Muddling Through. The Organisation of British Army Chaplaincy*

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<sup>31</sup> Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), esp. ch. 4, pp. 99-118; *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project, 1914-1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), esp. ch. 1, pp. 7-25.

<sup>32</sup> Michael Snape, *God and the British Soldier. Religion and the British Army in the First and Second World Wars* (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 2005); Snape, *Clergy under Fire*.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Snape and Edward Madigan, *The Clergy in Khaki. New Perspectives on British Army Chaplaincy in the First World War* (Farnham and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Studies in First World War History, Ashgate Publishing, 2013).

<sup>34</sup> Edward Madigan, *Faith Under Fire. Anglican Army Chaplains and the Great War* (Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).

in *World War One* by Peter Howson<sup>35</sup>; and *Captains of the Soul. A history of Australian Army chaplains* by Michael Gladwin<sup>36</sup>. These are valuable context for my research.

In the standard works on the two world wars the subject of chaplaincy barely appears. *The Times History of the War* (the First World War) of twenty-two volumes has a section on the Churches including two pages which address “The Jewish Church”.<sup>37</sup> *The Cambridge History of the First World War* includes sections on *Minorities* and on *Beliefs and Religion*.<sup>38</sup> The fifty seven volume official *History of the Second World War* does not contain an index.<sup>39</sup> Amongst the military historians, Martin Gilbert’s *First/Second World War*<sup>40</sup> and Basil H. Liddell Hart’s *History of the First/Second World War*,<sup>41</sup> for example, do not discuss chaplaincy.

In *The Last Great War. British Society and the First World War* Adrian Gregory wrote on *Redemption through war: Religion and the languages of sacrifice*.<sup>42</sup> Against the background of the role of religion in Britain during the First World War he considers the extent to which soldiers in the trenches found religion in a general sense even if

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<sup>35</sup> Peter Howson, *Muddling Through. The Organisation of British Army Chaplaincy in World War One* (Solihull, West Midlands: Helion & Company, 2013).

<sup>36</sup> Michael Gladwin, *Captains of the Soul. A history of Australian Army chaplains* (Newport, NSW: Big Sky Publishing, 2016).

<sup>37</sup> *The Times History of the War (1914-1921)* (London, 1921), volume VIII, chapter no.132, pp. 313-352 on *The Churches and the Armies*, including at pp. 350 (a few lines) - 352 *The Jewish Church*.

<sup>38</sup> Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), vol. 3, *Civil Society*. Panikos Panayi, *Minorities*, pp. 216-241; Adrian Gregory, *Beliefs and Religion*, pp. 418-444. I discuss this in section 9.1. below.

<sup>39</sup> *History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Civil Series* (London: HMSO and Longmans Green, 1949-1950).

<sup>40</sup> Martin Gilbert, *First World War and Second World War* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1994 and 1989).

<sup>41</sup> Basil H. Liddell Hart, *History of the First/Second World War* (London: Book Club Associates, 1930, 1970).

<sup>42</sup> Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War. British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), ch. 5, pp. 152-186.

it was not specifically Christianity. There are two histories of British Army chaplaincy: an early and unsatisfactory work in 1968 by John Smyth and Michael Snape's *The Royal Army Chaplains Department 1796- 1953: Clergy under Fire*.<sup>43</sup> Whilst there are many regimental and unit histories, there is not, unlike New Zealand<sup>44</sup>, an official history of the British Army nor of the RACHD. Nor is there anything analogous to, for example, a quasi-official paper on army chaplaincy published under the auspices of although not necessarily representing the views of the United States Army Combined Arms Center.<sup>45</sup>

### 3.4. British Jewish Chaplaincy

Michael Adler included in the *British Jewry Book of Honour* a section about his experiences as a Jewish chaplain on the western front in the First World War.<sup>46</sup> With the centennial resurgence of interest in the First World War, two works in 2019 on Jews in the First World War include discussion of chaplaincy. In *The Jewish Experience of the First World War* Edward Madigan writes on Anglo-Jewish gratitude, patriotism and service during and after the Great War, and the influential role of Rev. Michael Adler in articulating that patriotism and in memorialising the military contribution of British Jewry in the face of rising post-war antisemitism.<sup>47</sup> In writing on the experiences of Jewish soldiers in Europe and the USA during that war, Sarah Panter considers the institutionalisation of a Jewish chaplaincy as a symbol of

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<sup>43</sup> Brigadier The Rt. Hon. Sir John Smyth, Bt, VC, MC, *In this Sign Conquer. The Story of the Army Chaplains* (London: Mowbray, 1968). Snape, *Clergy under Fire*.

<sup>44</sup> *Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War. New Zealand Chaplains in the Second World War* by M.L. Underhill and others (Wellington: War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1950).

<sup>45</sup> Chaplain Major Philip A Kramer, *The Proximity Principle: Army Chaplains in the Fighting Line in Doctrine and History* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: US Army Command and General Staff College Press, 2015).

<sup>46</sup> BJBH, pp. 33-58.

<sup>47</sup> Madigan and Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience: Edward Madigan, Thou Hast Given Us Home and Freedom, Mother England.*, pp. 307-333.

religious and civic equality and the role of Jewish chaplains functioning as mediators between the experiences of soldiers at the front and the expectations raised by Jewish communities on the home fronts.<sup>48</sup> A popular work by Paula Kitching, *Britain's Jews in the First World War*, discusses the response, contributions and achievements of British Jews and includes a chapter on faith and the Jewish chaplaincy.<sup>49</sup> It argues that the war drew Jews, who had often been viewed as outsiders, into British society and facilitated their absorption of the norms and culture of British society.

During the First World War, Australian and New Zealand Jewish Chaplaincy became effectively a subset of British Jewish Chaplaincy. There were two successive Australian Jewish Chaplains. There was also an official Jewish Representative appointed by the Australian YMCA and accredited chaplaincy representative, Lieutenant Harold Boas, who effectively functioned as a chaplain. In 1919 he published *The Australian YMCA: With the Jewish Soldier of the Australian Imperial Force*, a pocket-sized book of two hundred pages surveying the wartime operation of Australian Jewish chaplaincy services, Australian and English Jewish chaplaincy and English Jewish wartime organisations.<sup>50</sup>

There is a PhD thesis of 2009 at the University of Southampton by Anne Patricia Lloyd entitled *Jews under Fire: the Jewish Community and Military Service in World*

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<sup>48</sup> Madigan and Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience*: Sarah Panter, *Between Inclusion and Exclusion* pp. 159-181 at 161, 175.

<sup>49</sup> Paula Kitching, *Britain's Jews in the First World War* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2019), ch. 6, citing myself at pp. 157-158.

<sup>50</sup> Harold Boas, *The Australian Y.M.C.A with the Jewish Soldier of the Australian Imperial Force, together with a General Survey of the Operation of the Australian Jewish Chaplaincy Department and the English Jewish War Services* (London: privately published, 1919). I refer to this work simply as "Boas" and discuss Harold Boas in section 9.22.4.

*War I Britain*. It discusses the dichotomy between Jewishness and Anglicisation which emerged between the religious and cultural practices of the immigrant sector of the Jewish community, which were far removed from those of Anglo-Jews from whom the Jewish organisations and most of the Jewish chaplains derived, and the “precarious balance between established and immigrant Jews”. Within a thesis of 241 pages, a chapter entitled “Support for Jewish fighting men” includes sections entitled “Faith under fire” and “Army responses to Judaism”.<sup>51</sup> Whilst addressing chaplaincy, essentially and rightly as the creation of Rev. Michael Adler, it does not, entirely understandably, do so in detail. My own work is a deeper examination of what represents but one aspect of Lloyd’s much broader canvas.

As to the Second World War, there are a number of memoirs. These are *Now I Can Tell: Middle Eastern Memories*, about North Africa, and *Witness to Evil*, about Bergen Belsen, both by Rev. Isaac Levy<sup>52</sup>; *The Survivors, The Story of the Belsen Remnant*, also about Bergen Belsen, by Rev. Leslie H. Hardman and Cecily Goodman<sup>53</sup>; and sections of *Some Memories of My Ministry* by Rabbi Dr. Leslie

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<sup>51</sup> Anne Patricia Lloyd, *Jews under Fire: the Jewish Community and Military Service in World War 1 Britain*. PhD dissertation, University of Southampton, Faculty of Law, Arts & Social Sciences, School of Humanities, 2009; Chapter 4 at pp. 91-116, including at pp. 92-111 *Faith under fire* and *Army responses to Judaism* and at p. 116 the “precarious balance” quotation.

<sup>52</sup> Isaac Levy, *Now I Can Tell, Middle Eastern Memories* (Kettering, Northants: Dalkeith Press, 1978), and *Witness to Evil Bergen-Belsen 1945* (London: Peter Halban in association with The European Jewish Publication Society, 1995).

<sup>53</sup> Leslie H Hardman and Cecily Goodman, *The Survivors, The Story of the Belsen Remnant* (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1958). There is an M.A. thesis by Robert Thompson of the University of Southampton of 2019 about Christian chaplains at Bergen-Belsen which is referred to in section 11.21.

Edgar<sup>54</sup> and *Rabbis are Human* by Rabbi Bernard Hooker<sup>55</sup>. There are also a number of articles about individual chaplains of both world wars.

### 3.5. Jewish Chaplaincy in Other Countries

In the United States, there are a number of works on general<sup>56</sup> and Jewish<sup>57</sup> chaplaincy. As to the latter, two works are significant. *GI Jews: How World War II*

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<sup>54</sup> Rabbi Dr. Leslie I. Edgar, *Some Memories of My Ministry* (London: Liberal Jewish Synagogue, 1985).

<sup>55</sup> Rabbi Bernard Hooker, *Rabbis are Human* (Ledbury, Herefordshire: privately published, 1997).

<sup>56</sup> These include: Doris L. Bergen, *The Sword of the Lord: Military Chaplains from the First to the Twenty-First Century (Critical Problems in History)* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2004); Lyle W. Dorsett, *Serving God and Country: United States Military Chaplains in World War II* (New York: Berkeley Books, 2012); Michael Snape, *God and Uncle Sam. Religion and America's Armed Forces in World War II* (Woodbridge Suffolk and Rochester New York: The Boydell Press, 2015). A PhD dissertation in 2014 by Ronit Yael Stahl, *God, War and Politics: The American Military Chaplaincy and the Making of a Multi-Religious Nation*, University of Michigan, 2014, addresses military chaplaincy in the United States from the First World War to the Vietnam War. It "reveals how the modern American state wielded power over and through religion, transforming the spiritual landscape of American society as well as using faith to support military and foreign policy goals" (p.7), "argues that the state actively managed religious groups and shaped the religious experiences of the men under its control" (p.13) and "identifies how a multi-religious chaplaincy built a multi-religious nation over six decades of the twentieth century" (p.13). It was published as Ronit Y. Stahl, *Enlisting Faith. How the Military Chaplaincy Shaped Religion and State in Modern America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017).

<sup>57</sup> These include: Rabbi James L. Apple, *What Kind of a Job is This, For a Nice Jewish Boy? Memoir of a Rabbi and Navy Chaplain* (Xlibris Corporation, 2005); Louis Barish, *Rabbis in Uniform: The Story of the American Jewish Military Chaplain* (Literary Licensing, 2012); Philip S. Bernstein, *Rabbis at War: The CANRA Story* (Waltham, Mass: American Jewish Historical Society, 1971); Tamra L. Dollin, *L'chaim, A Zayde Adventure: Memoirs of a Rabbi's Life* (iUniverse, 2008); Dov. P. Elkins, *God's Warriors: Dramatic Adventures of Rabbis in Uniform* (Jonathan David Pub., 1974); Alex Grobman, *Rekindling the Flame: American Jewish Chaplains and the Survivors of European Jewry (1944-48)* (Wayne State University Press, 1992); Rabbi Lee. J. Levinger, *A Jewish Chaplain in France* (1921; reprinted Leopold Classic Library, 2016 and Forgotten Books, 2017); Greg Palmer and Mark S. Zaid (eds.), *The GI's Rabbi: World War II Letters of David Max Eichorn* (University Press of Kansas, 2004). Of these, Apple, Dollin, Levinger and Palmer and Zaid are essentially memoirs. Levinger served in the First World War and the other chaplains in the Second. *Sidney B. Hoening, The Orthodox Rabbi as a Military Chaplain in Tradition*, 1976, vol 16, no.2, pp. 35-60 at p. 38.

*Changed a Generation* by Deborah Dash Moore discusses the far reaching effects of the Second World War upon American Jewish life.<sup>58</sup> It argues that the “Judeo-Christian tradition”, of equality for Jews and Judaism as one of the pillars sustaining American democracy, was born in the army in the Second World War. Military service enhanced both the process of Americanisation and the intensification of Jewish identity. Of the 311 commissioned Jewish chaplains of that war, 147 represented the Reform movement, 96 the Conservative and 68 the Modern Orthodox.<sup>59</sup> This, I note, contrasts with Britain, where centrist Orthodoxy has always been the major denominational movement.<sup>60</sup>

Noting, as stated above, the paucity of existing scholarship, Albert I Slomovitz, a United States naval chaplain, discusses in *The Fighting Rabbis: Jewish Military Chaplains and American History* the longstanding ties and concerns of the American Jewish community for Jews in the armed forces and reassesses their contemporary relationship. He chronicles the unique histories of military Rabbis and the role which from the earliest days they have played in the country’s defence, and narrates that, as the exact opposite of the popular belief of the military being another segment of American society tainted with antisemitism, military chaplaincy built the foundation for future interfaith programmes in larger society.<sup>61</sup>

*Loyalty Betrayed – Jewish Chaplains in the German Army during the First World War*, by Peter C. Appelbaum, addresses this subject and comprises largely the

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<sup>58</sup> Deborah Dash Moore, *G.I. Jews. How World War II Changed a Generation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004).

<sup>59</sup> Very loosely speaking, this is from “left” to “right” the denominational spectrum of Jewish religious observance.

<sup>60</sup> I discuss this in section 6.4.

<sup>61</sup> Slomovitz, *The Fighting Rabbis*. I discuss this in sections 2.4. and 8.

annotated diaries and records of a number of the twenty nine German chaplains of that war, all of them civilians.<sup>62</sup> Vanda Wilcox has written about Jewish soldiers in Italy including their diverse levels of religious observance and the role of Jewish chaplains in the First World War.<sup>63</sup>

*Jewish Preaching in Times of War 1800 to 2001* by Marc Saperstein is an edited collection of sermons delivered in Britain, the United States and Canada.<sup>64</sup> Although only one is an address delivered by a chaplain in the field (by an American chaplain at Iwo Jima in 1945), they exemplify diverse religious wartime perspectives from the times of the wars of Napoleon and the nineteenth century up to the attacks on the United States of 11 September 2001. Saperstein also considers the wartime sermons of Rev. Morris Joseph of the Reform Movement in the First World War, which recognise peace as an ultimate value in Judaism and from an initial position of deep dismay move gradually towards the Allied victory as the revelation of a divine plan.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Peter C. Appelbaum, *Loyalty Betrayed: Jewish Chaplains in the German Army During the First World War* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2014).

<sup>63</sup> Madigan and Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience: Vanda Wilcox, Between Faith and Nation: Italian Jewish Soldiers in the Great War*, pp. 183-206 at 194-204. Note 36 records that in 1917 the Jewish chaplaincy of the Italian 3<sup>rd</sup> Army received a request in English from a British artilleryman serving in Italy to assist him, which they were unable to do, to find a local synagogue for regular Shabbat services.

<sup>64</sup> Marc Saperstein, *Jewish Preaching in Times of War 1800-2001* (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: ISBS; The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2008, 2012).

<sup>65</sup> Marc Saperstein, *Morris Joseph and the West London Synagogue in the First World War* in *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe*, vol. 48, no.1 (Spring 2015), pp. 33-46.



#### 4. THE SPECIFIC CASE OF BRITISH JEWISH CHAPLAINCY

Whilst British Christian clergy and chaplains had served in the field for centuries, the first British Jewish chaplain to do so was Michael Adler on the western front in the First World War. He fought to be allowed to do so, after being refused permission by the War Office. British Jewish chaplaincy in the field was essentially his creation. In his obituary in 1944 his successor as Senior Jewish Chaplain on the western front, Rev. Arthur Barnett, described his achievement as a *creatio ex nihilo*, a view which I have come to share.<sup>1</sup> Edward Madigan has drawn on Adler's wartime and post-war service to offer an overview of his wartime service.<sup>2</sup>

Martin Watts and Christopher Smith have written on the Jewish Legion.<sup>3</sup> Other works on the three Jewish units and on Jews in the navy and Sugarman's substantial work are essentially of a narrative character. Beyond that, little has been written on Jews in the British military. The standard works on British Jewish history, including Albert M. Hyamson, *A History of the Jews in England*; Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England*; Vivian D Lipman, *A History of the Jews in Britain since 1858*; Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*; and Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain 1656 to 2000*, barely address the subject at all.<sup>4</sup> David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle*

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<sup>1</sup> JHS, vol. 15, 1939-1945, pp. 191-194.

<sup>2</sup> I discuss this in section 2.3. and 3.4.

<sup>3</sup> I discuss this in sections 3.1., 3.2. and 9.29.

<sup>4</sup> Albert M. Hyamson, *A History of the Jews in England*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908; Methuen, 1928, briefly at p. 292 re. First World War, including the Zion Mule Corps); Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941, 1964); V.D. Lipman, *A History of the Jews in Britain since 1858* (Leicester and London: Leicester University Press, 1990); Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain 1656-2000* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2002). David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews. Social Relations and Political Culture 1840-1914* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994) ends at 1914. William D.

*and Anglo Jewry, 1841-1991* has sections on both world wars but with little reference to Jews in the military.<sup>5</sup>

In relation to Britain, virtually none of the historiography addresses the implications for Jews of military service and a military career, as Derek Penslar does in relation to 19<sup>th</sup> century France; nor, except for a single passage by Todd Endelman identifying the issue,<sup>6</sup> the influence of wartime military service upon Jewish life in the twentieth century, as does Dash Moore in relation to the United States; nor the history and role of military chaplaincy, as does Albert Slomovitz, also in relation to the United States.<sup>7</sup> Nor does it address, as does my work to some extent although not as its primary focus, the communal structures of British Jewry which have supported Jewish servicemen and chaplains from the inception of Jewish chaplaincy in 1892 until the present day and specifically throughout both world wars. Nor, above all, does it at all address Jewish chaplaincy itself. In doing so I consider the two issues identified in section 1 of the initiative for chaplaincy and unofficial chaplaincy.

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Rubenstein, *A History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World: Great Britain*. (Basingstoke and London: MacMillan Press. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996) is discussed at section 6.8.

<sup>5</sup> David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo Jewry, 1841-1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p.222.

<sup>7</sup> Slomovitz, *The Fighting Rabbis*.

## 5. THE METHODOLOGY OF MY RESEARCH

For the reasons discussed above, much of my work comprises primary and original research. There is no collected body of material on this topic, nor even any full list of the Jewish chaplains of the Second World War. As the first person to research this topic holistically, I have come to think of my research as a jigsaw in which I have first to discover the pieces. The material is in many locations, some of which I have come upon as my research has progressed.

I have participated since 2013 in an interest group on military chaplaincy which confers annually for three days at the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre at Amport House in Amport in Hampshire (although it is now due to relocate) with a programme of delivered papers and discussions, and have presented papers at each conference since 2014. The group comprises serving and retired chaplains (some of considerable experience and some of scholastic achievement, including some from the United States), scholars and students, and I have learned much from them. The group discussions reflect an ecumenical approach to chaplaincy which bore on the historical development of Jewish chaplaincy. Participation in this group has also facilitated learning of the existence of and obtaining access to much archival and library material at the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre of which I might otherwise not have been aware<sup>1</sup>, and members of the group have contacted me when in the course of their own research they have discovered material which they have identified as being of possible interest to me.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. army chaplaincy cards of Second World War chaplains; *Battle Log of 8 Corps Rhine to Baltic*; Anderson, *All the A's*.

Institutional Jewish communal control of chaplaincy vested from its inception in the Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue, whose records, venerable in the nineteenth century in manuscript, sometimes copperplate, in large leather bound volumes, are at the London Metropolitan Archives.<sup>2</sup> There too are the relevant records of the United Synagogue, the Office of the Chief Rabbi, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Jewish Memorial Council (which had some responsibility for chaplaincy after the Second World War) and other bodies. In both world wars a broadly based Jewish War Services Committee (JWSC) was formed, as a channel of communication between the Jewish community and the government on matters affecting Jewish concerns, including the appointment of chaplains.<sup>3</sup> Through deduction I located the minute book and other papers of the JWSC of the First World War within the Rothschild Archive, although I later discovered that Anne Patricia Lloyd<sup>4</sup> had also done so. The papers of the JWSC of the Second World War were deposited by the Jewish Memorial Council at the London Metropolitan Archives, but were withdrawn in 1998 and not returned.<sup>5</sup> At my request the London Metropolitan Archives enquired of the depositor if the papers were to be returned, but without response. The Jewish Memorial Council did not respond to my several enquiries, and it is unclear whether it still operates. Another researcher has noted that these records are lost.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> I discuss these in sections 7., 9.24., 10.2. and 11.4.

<sup>3</sup> I discuss this in sections 9.24. and 11.4.

<sup>4</sup> I discuss her thesis in section 3.4.

<sup>5</sup> LMA, ACC/2999/E/01/001, 002.

<sup>6</sup> Alan Robinson, *Chaplains at War. The Role of Clergymen During World War II. International Library of War Studies 11* (London and New York: I.B.Tauris, 2008), pp. 96-97.

The officer files of ten of the nineteen British Jewish chaplains of the First World War survive at the National Archives. Three of these files record that they were weeded in 1936 and 1937, without any indication of what material was removed. Chaplaincy cards of many of the army chaplains of the Second World War are at Amport House. The Royal Air Force Museum in London has some material about some of the RAF chaplains of the Second World War.

The First World War diaries of Rev. Michael Adler and much other relevant material are within the Special Collections of the University of Southampton. I have consulted material at the Jewish Museum in London.<sup>7</sup> The museum incorporates the substantial corpus of material from the former museum of the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women, whose archivist, Martin Sugarman, has furnished me with material and been of invaluable assistance.<sup>8</sup> I have also consulted material at the Imperial War Museum, the Wiener Holocaust Library and the Bishopsgate Institute, all in London; the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in Maidenhead; the Special Collections of the University of Cambridge; the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre in Glasgow; and a museum of British military involvement in Palestine/Israel named *Bet Hagedudim* – the House of the Brigades – at Avichail near Netanya in Israel. The British Library in London and the libraries of the University of London have been an invaluable resource. I have accessed through email the Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives and, through the assistance of reliable people who have visited and researched for me, the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington,

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<sup>7</sup> The Jewish Museum in London is re-ordering its collections, so any verification of my source material may not locate it under the particular reference which I have cited.

<sup>8</sup> I discuss him in section 3.1.

USA and the Sydney Jewish Museum and the records of the Great Synagogue in Sydney, Australia.

I have utilised the resources of British Jewish communal organisations, with whose structure I am familiar (having served, for example, for six years as a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews), and approached leading communal figures to an extent which it might have been difficult for a much younger person to do. I have advertised within the Jewish community for material, and given numerous talks on the subject, during which I have requested chaplaincy material and memories of people who served or their families. In consequence I have interviewed and gathered material from eight people who variously served (other than as chaplains) in the Second World War, Korea and national service and the widow of one who served in Korea, and one man wrote to me from Israel of his national service experiences. I practised for thirty years as a solicitor in the City of London and for close to twenty years as a judge, and so am accustomed to taking evidence and evaluating its reliability.

I interviewed two chaplains. Captain David Arkush RADC served for all practical purposes as a Jewish chaplain as well as a dental officer through three and a half years of Japanese captivity. I interviewed him at the age of 98; he passed away at the age of 100. Rev. Avraham Greenbaum served for some eighteen months at Bergen Belsen Concentration Camp after its liberation as a civilian chaplain and married a survivor. I interviewed him at the age of 92 at his home in Jerusalem in Israel; he was in poor health and passed away twelve days later. I evaluated the evidence of both to be reliable.

The *Jewish Chronicle* newspaper has published weekly on Fridays since 1841 and the *Jewish World* newspaper published weekly on Wednesdays until the 1930s. In 1913 the *Jewish Chronicle* acquired the *Jewish World*, and they were produced from the same office with the same proprietor and the same editor.<sup>9</sup> I have turned the frail pages of the *Jewish World* at the British Library for the First World War, and, partially with the preliminary help of its electronic search engine, of the *Jewish Chronicle* at the London School of Jewish Studies (previously known as Jews' College) for both world wars. The newspapers provide a contemporary record of events, including chaplaincy appointments and letters of appreciation describing the activities of chaplains, albeit subject to the inevitable suppression of their locations. There are regular complaints of the shortage of chaplains and sometimes accounts of how in consequence soldiers had to fend religiously for themselves. Throughout the Second World War Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz wrote regular colourful accounts for the press of his activities, for which he was privately criticised by Rev. Isaac Levy for self-promotion, and other chaplains wrote on occasion. In relation to some of the chaplains my knowledge derives mainly from the press. Obituaries of chaplains in the *Jewish Chronicle* are particularly valuable. I cite the *Jewish Chronicle* extensively, together with the *Jewish World* for the First World War. My general impression is that, consistent with the inevitable wartime censorship and suppression of information, the quality national press and the Jewish press were much more reliable in those eras than they are today.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Madigan and Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience: Madigan Thou Hast Given Us Home and Freedom, Mother England*, pp. 307-318.

<sup>10</sup> The *Jewish Chronicle* is discussed by David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo Jewry, 1841-1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) and by Geoffrey Cantor, *Anglo-Jewish periodicals of the 1840s: The Voice of Jacob and two Jewish Chronicles*, JHS, vol. 49, 2018, pp. 12-35.

Cautiously used, the internet is an invaluable resource, especially for biographical information about chaplains. I have not set out on a genealogical search for the families of chaplains, but through the resources of the Jewish community I have discovered those of six chaplains of the First World War and of thirteen chaplains and one officiating clergyman of the Second. All were enthusiastic to assist me, and some have furnished material. This includes the diary and letters home of Rev. David Hirsch and the recollections, recorded by his daughter, of Rev. John Geffen, both from the western front in the First World War. Rev. Leib Falk who served for three years with the Jewish Legion in the First World War published a series of articles about his experiences. Through a fortuitous chain of events I was placed in contact with his family in Australia, who have furnished me with much material.

With regards to the Second World War I have read some letters home from North Africa of Rev. Harry Bornstein. After the war Rev. Isaac Levy published separate books on his experiences of three years in North Africa and then at Bergen Belsen concentration camp during one year in Europe. Fortuitously I also came upon Levy's diaries and letters to his wife. The diaries comprise four volumes of full, well written and acutely observed narrative diary entries, typed every few days and mostly stuck into army issue exercise books, three for Britain and then North Africa and the fourth for Europe, ending shortly before he arrived at Bergen Belsen. There is also a large file of Levy's equally full letters to his wife. As Levy was in a position of seniority, these are an invaluable account not only of his own day by day activities but of the structure and scope of Jewish chaplaincy throughout both campaigns, with much information about the other chaplains. Levy was a demanding taskmaster of those who fell below his own conscientious high standards, and was critical of most of the

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locally recruited Palestinian chaplains in North Africa as well as some of the British ones both there and in Europe. In his published book on his experiences in North Africa he refrained from naming the Palestinian chaplains and from including much information about them, but his diaries and letters are less inhibited. Several of the Palestinian chaplains I would not have known of at all but for Levy. His diaries and letters are the single most valuable discovery which I have made and justify my several months of work reading, summarising and extracting from them.

As to the period after the Second World War to date, the previous Jewish chaplain Rev. Malcolm Weisman and current chaplains Rabbis Reuben Livingstone and Ariel Abel have willingly shared with me their experiences and perspectives. The magazine of what is now termed the Armed Forces Jewish Community, *Menorah*, has been published in most years since 1948, sometimes in two or three issues in a year, and is an invaluable contemporary source of information about Jewish military service including chaplaincy. The RACHD Journal also sometimes contains relevant material.

Two families have shown me sets of letters giving rise to case studies. In the First World War those relating to Australian Private Samuel Bishop exemplify the procedures for dealing with the death of a Jewish soldier, including the cooperation of non-Jewish chaplains. In the Second the very full and regular letters home of Corporal Simon Kritz, RAMC, who served throughout the whole of the war in numerous theatres around the world, exemplify the efforts of an observant Jewish

soldier to adhere to his faith and on occasion to help others to do so in the inevitable absence save on very rare occasions of a Jewish chaplain.<sup>11</sup>

As to what I term unofficial chaplaincy, material is harder to come by and derives from numerous sources, including letters in the *Jewish Chronicle*, some of the people whom I interviewed and the man who wrote to me from Israel. One significant source is the assembled correspondence which was initiated by the minister of the Sunderland Jewish community in 1942 with congregants serving around the world.<sup>12</sup> No doubt much more material exists in memories and attics, and doubtless there are families of chaplains whom I have not located who have relevant material.

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<sup>11</sup> I discuss these in sections 9.21 and 11.17. That relating to Kritz I received through his grandson, a fellow doctoral student in the same department as myself at UCL.

<sup>12</sup> Davis, Harold A. Davis (ed.), *Sunderland Jewry at War, Sunderland Jewish Community, Bulletin for the Forces (1942-1946)* (Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk: Arima Publishing, 2009). I discuss this in section 11.16.

## 6. THE NATURE OF JEWISH CHAPLAINCY

### 6.1. Preliminary

In this thesis my description of Jewish Law and practice is that of religious Orthodoxy in Britain, from which other Jewish denominations in Britain differ in various respects. This is appropriate because, as now discussed, Orthodoxy became the religious denomination of British Jewish chaplaincy. The use of many Jewish terms is inevitable. I have attempted to explain them concisely, and have drawn them into a glossary to avoid endless repetitive footnotes. There is also a list of abbreviations of military and other terms.

### 6.2. Judaism and Rabbis

Every religion is different, and so therefore is every form of ministry and chaplaincy. As doubtless all religions, the nature of Judaism influences the nature of its chaplaincy.

Rabbis are not priests. There is a priestly caste in Judaism, known as the Cohanim (sing. Cohen), whose status is hereditary, through the male line. Originating from their duties in the Temple services of Biblical times, the Cohanim retain certain ritual functions within the service of the synagogue. Some Rabbis are Cohanim, but that is unrelated to their Rabbinical role. There are no functions reserved to Rabbis which other religiously observant adult (meaning from the age of thirteen) male Jews cannot perform. Thus any religiously observant adult male Jew may conduct a religious service, a wedding and a funeral. In wartime this fact greatly facilitated unofficial chaplaincy.

A Rabbi is a teacher. “Rav” means teacher and “Rabbi” my teacher. Communal Rabbis habitually perform functions of religious communal leadership, but essentially through the prism of teaching, not of priesthood.

Rabbis are ordained through a process of the laying of hands upon their head by a Rabbi and the grant of religious ordination known as Semicha, which derives from the transfer of authority by Moses to Joshua.<sup>1</sup> Semicha confers the right and sometimes the duty to give rulings upon questions of Jewish Law (Halacha) which are posed to the Rabbi. Those rulings are prima facie binding upon a Jew who accepts the authority of the particular Rabbi, such as a member of his community.

### 6.3. British Jewish History<sup>2</sup>

Jews from France settled in England in the wake of the Norman Conquest of 1066. They were expelled in 1290 and effectively readmitted with the concurrence of Cromwell in the closing years of the Commonwealth from 1656. They came, initially in small numbers, from many lands in western and eastern Europe in a number of waves of immigration, of which the largest was from Czarist Russia and Eastern Europe between 1882 and 1914, and then from Germany and Austria between 1933 and 1939.

It is a singular feature of the history of the British Jewish community that until the early 1960s it contained very few Rabbis. There were always some Rabbis who came from abroad, generally from intensely religious communities within Eastern Europe, sometimes to minister to their own migrated communities, but they tended to

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<sup>1</sup> Bemidbar/Numbers, ch. 27, v. 18, and Devarim/Deuteronomy, ch. 34, v. 9.

<sup>2</sup> The material in this section is but the barest background to the development of chaplaincy. It derives generally from the historiography in section 4.

stand outside the mainstream British Jewish community. In 1855<sup>3</sup> Jews' College, now known as the London School of Jewish Studies, was established in order to train students for the British Jewish ministry. Predominantly English born, they graduated not as Rabbis but with the Anglican and non-Jewish term "Reverend", wearing an Anglican clerical collar, together with the bowler hat and umbrella of the English gentleman to whom some of the younger generation, uncomfortable with the foreign ways of their parents, tended to gravitate.

Partially this pattern developed as the way and custom, known as the Minhag Anglia, of the British Jewish community. British Jewry was not a scholarly community and did not seek Rabbinic educators. Partially, reflecting an authoritarian age, it seems to have been the deliberate intent of successive Chief Rabbis to be and remain the sole authority on matters of Jewish Law, which governs all aspects of the life of the religiously observant Jew. Amongst religiously learned and observant communities the concept of a centralised religious authority and a "Chief Rabbi" is not a Jewish one, although in more recent times it has widely taken hold around the world for pragmatic reasons. But within a British community widely seen elsewhere as gravely deficient in Jewish observance and scholarship, the concentration of religious authority in a sole Rabbi was an attempt to instil and preserve the religious standards of traditional Orthodoxy, without the scope for challenge by other Rabbis upon the many matters upon which Jewish Law permits scope for disputation.

For their own self-respect some ministers, believed to have included Rev. Michael Adler<sup>4</sup>, obtained Semicha secretly. Some, such as Rev. David Freedman from

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<sup>3</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p. 119. Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> Anderson, *All the A's*, p. 3.

Australia<sup>5</sup>, took the opportunity whilst serving abroad as chaplains to obtain it from a foreign Rabbi. Only in the early 1960s was there a recognition in Britain of the need for change, with ministers of the United Synagogue permitted leave of absence to study to become Rabbis. Some men established in their careers and communities, such as former chaplain Rev. Leslie Hardman, elected to remain “Rev.” all their days.

Whilst Orthodoxy is itself a broad spectrum, the greater part of the British Jewish community adhered, and still does, to a tradition which may be described as centrist or, in Sacks’ phrase, inclusive Orthodoxy. In Britain Orthodoxy essentially followed the religious rites of Poland and Lithuania, which is one of several divergent religious traditions of Eastern Europe, others of which have influenced the form of Orthodoxy in the United States and elsewhere. This tradition underlay the creation of the aspirationally named United Synagogue in 1870. Religiously the centrist Orthodox tradition was presided over by the Chief Rabbi, whose title was something of a misnomer for he was in fact virtually the only Rabbi. In nineteenth-century Britain the communities of the emerging Reform Movement were fewer and smaller than those which adhered to the lifestyle of traditional religious observance, which some more progressive Jews in nineteenth-century Germany came disparagingly to term Orthodoxy. Unlike the United States, the several other Jewish religious denominations which may loosely and compendiously be referred to as the Progressive Movement have not achieved comparable numerical significance in Britain.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> I discuss Rev. Freedman in section 9.22.2.

<sup>6</sup> Sacks, *Community of Faith*, pp. 109-110. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, pp. 12-13, 119-120, 267-269.

In the days of Empire the Jewries of Britain and of the Commonwealth were subject to the religious authority of the Chief Rabbi. As, today, “The United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth”, to some formal degree they still are. In the present era of generally weakening religious commitment in parts of the western world, the Jewish communities of the Commonwealth continue to adhere predominantly to a centrist or inclusivist Orthodox model of traditional religious observance. Thus it is arguable that the successive Chief Rabbis were successful in their aim of centralising religious practice and authority. This is radically different to the position in other countries, including in Europe, the United States and Israel.<sup>7</sup>

Over the millenia since the first exile from the Land of Israel, to Babylon, in 586 BCE, Jews have lived in virtually every land and country of the world. Jewish Law, which accompanied them, accordingly came to prescribe that, save in relation to matters of religious observance and personal status, Jews are to observe the law of the land in which they live. This is perhaps the earliest example of what lawyers term the conflict of laws or private international law. For that legal reason and for pragmatic reasons Jews settling in Britain from the seventeenth century onwards sought to accommodate themselves to the norms and structures of British life. Their scope to do so derived from the voluntary nature of religion in Britain, which never sought to regulate the structures of religious life, as did Germany in the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> To some extent the Jewish community modelled the structures which it created, such as the United Synagogue and the Board of Deputies of British Jews, upon British institutions.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Sacks, *Community of Faith*, chs. 3-8, esp. p. 37.

<sup>8</sup> Sacks, *Community of Faith*, ch. 6, esp. pp. 55-56.

<sup>9</sup> In truth there is not one “British Jewish community” but various, reflecting varying religious and social groupings and countries of origin, and many individuals who do

Until 1882 Jews in Britain were probably not more than fifty thousand in number. The descendants of the pedlars and beggars of the eighteenth century had settled into a middle class life as shopkeepers and traders, and the leadership of the community was drawn from a small and prominent upper class “cousinhood”. The arrival of perhaps some 120,000-150,000 poor and visibly foreign Jews between 1882 and 1914 provoked hostility in some more extreme quarters and the not unduly rigorous Aliens Act 1905, although followed by the more draconian Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act 1919.<sup>10</sup> There were great social pressures of poverty in the areas where Jewish immigrants settled. Antisemitism existed at all levels of society, and was sometimes acute. Yet Jewish immigrants and their descendants were able to integrate into Britain’s essentially tolerant and unideological way of life.<sup>11</sup>

Since their readmission from 1656 the integration of Jews into Britain was gradual and undramatic. This is the basic thesis of the leading contemporary historians of British Jewry, Todd Endelman and David Feldman. Endelman speaks of “the lack of surface drama in English Jewish history – trials, riots, violence, ideological clashes, cultural ferment.” “At any point between the mid-eighteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, it was easier to be a Jew in Britain than elsewhere in Europe.”<sup>12</sup> Feldman’s work “attempts to take a broad view of the history of the Jewish presence in England. It strives to draw together the institutional, social and economic history of the Jews

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not regard themselves as affiliated to any of them. Other than the term “British Jewry” there is no concise way of expressing this, and so in considering the interaction between Jews and the British authorities I refer conveniently if not sufficiently accurately to “the British Jewish community”. There has long been a community leadership structure able to engage with the authorities, and thus, from the perspective of the authorities, a “British Jewish community”.

<sup>10</sup> Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* 1990, p. 124. I discuss this in section 9.1.

<sup>11</sup> Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, generally.

<sup>12</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, pp. 2, 9, 257.



with the political, religious and social history of England between 1840 – 1914. Its intention is to bring Jewish history and English history to bear on each other in illuminating exchanges.”<sup>13</sup> I will argue that the development of Jewish military service and of Jewish military chaplaincy in Britain exemplifies the Endelman thesis of gradualism and the Feldman thesis of integrated analysis.

#### 6.4. The Influence of British Jewish History upon Jewish Chaplaincy

In attempting to offer a deeper understanding of Jewish chaplaincy, the significance of this history is three-fold. The first aspect is that in both world wars the vast majority of the Jewish ministers of Britain and the Empire who became chaplains adhered to the tradition of centrist Orthodoxy. In an age of deference, this explains the respect of some of the chaplains, mindful of their dependence upon the Orthodox authorities for their post-war careers, for rulings of the Chief Rabbi and sometimes of the Beth Din – the religious court – which operates under the aegis of the Chief Rabbi and of the United Synagogue. In Britain that Beth Din is more authoritative than are its counterparts in some other countries. The chaplains of Palestine and the United States had no comparable point of authority.

The second aspect is that Jewish military chaplaincy itself adhered institutionally to the Orthodox tradition. It was controlled since its inception in 1892 by the Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue, of which most of its chaplains were ministers.<sup>14</sup> From the outset of the First World War there were compiled for Jewish soldiers a number of “authorised” pocket sized prayer and similar books under the aegis of the Chief Rabbi and based upon the Orthodox tradition. The *Authorised Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth* (formerly of the

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<sup>13</sup> Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, p. 17; also pp. 1-17, 387-388.

<sup>14</sup> I discuss this in sections 7., 9.24., 10.2. and 11.4.

*British Empire*) has itself always been “authorised”, and so remains, today with an edition for Jewish Members of H. M. Forces augmented by some prayers specifically appropriate to them.<sup>15</sup> The position is different in the United States, where Orthodoxy is one, and initially a minority one, among a number of denominational movements, the majority of Jewish chaplains were ordained in other traditions and there was and is no single official denominational basis of chaplaincy.

In 1940 the Liberal Rabbi Leslie Edgar was concerned about certain Orthodox prayers which he could not in conscience use were he to become a chaplain. With masterly pragmatism the devoutly Orthodox Senior Jewish Chaplain, Dayan Marks Gollop, told him that whilst he must use only the prayer book which was officially authorised for Jewish servicemen, Gollop left it entirely to Edgar’s judgement which parts of the book he did and did not use. With only one significant exception, which was the important matter of the selection of a new Senior Jewish Chaplain when Gollop became ill in 1943, British Jewish chaplaincy gave rise to remarkably little inter-denominational friction.<sup>16</sup>

Since 1945 all but one (who served from 1951 until 1954) of the ministers who have served as chaplains have been Orthodox, so issues concerning chaplaincy by non-Orthodox ministers have hardly arisen. Nor have those of female chaplains, as the Rabbinic ordination of women occurs in the non-Orthodox but not in the Orthodox movements. In the non-Orthodox world a woman may, for example, form part of a minyan and may conduct a service; in Orthodoxy, she may not.

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<sup>15</sup> The United Synagogue, *100 Years Ago ...Remembering World War One*.

<sup>16</sup> I discuss this in section 11.14.

The third aspect is that, unlike some of the chaplains locally recruited in Palestine by the British authorities during the North African campaign of the Second World War and unlike the chaplains of the United States, the vast majority of the chaplains of Britain and the Empire were not Rabbis. Many were products of Jews' College, which ordained its graduates not as Rabbis<sup>17</sup> but as ministers of religion with the title "Reverend".<sup>18</sup> Some unordained religious leaders, such as Sonny Bloch in the Second World War and Moshe Davis after it, adopted the term "Reverend" as a title convenient and expected within the armed forces. This did not affect the performance of their chaplaincy, and few Jewish servicemen understood or would have had any concern about this nuance.

The first commissioned Jewish military chaplain, Rev. Michael Adler, was commissioned into and accommodated himself to the Army Chaplains' Department. With the community's experience at adapting into the structures of British public life, this was the natural course to take. Adler needed only to arrange for a cap badge incorporating a Magen David, the Jewish emblem of the Shield of David, rather than the existing Departmental badge based upon a Cross.<sup>19</sup> Hence the unique dual cap badges of the AChD, later the RACHD. Beyond a few grumbles about the sometimes perceived rigidity of the RACHD, confided by Rev. Isaac Levy to the privacy of his diary and letters, and perhaps some personal manoeuvring by Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz in 1945<sup>20</sup>, there was never any attempt to challenge the authority of the

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<sup>17</sup> I discuss the significance of Rabbinic ordination in section 6.2.

<sup>18</sup> The graduates of Jews' College are listed in Taylor, *Defenders of the Faith. The History of Jews' College and the London School of Jewish Studies*, at pp. 299-301.

<sup>19</sup> Illustration 1.

<sup>20</sup> I discuss this in section 11.15.

AChD / RACHD, still less any declaration of separatism from the previously unified system of the RACHD such as the Roman Catholic chaplaincy made in 1940.<sup>21</sup>

### 6.5. Jewish Life

From its foundational text, the Torah - the Pentateuch, or the Five Books of Moses - Judaism has developed over the millenia a vast corpus of learning, sufficient for a person to immerse himself for his whole life, as some do. For many Jews, however, including the vast majority in Britain in the twentieth century, Judaism was neither a theology nor a source of study but an inherited ethno-religious identity and lifestyle which blended the observance of the synagogue with the rituals of the home.<sup>22</sup> So when Jewish military chaplaincy engaged with that observance and those rituals it could create a powerful spiritual and emotional connection with home and loved ones far away. It also facilitated the opportunity for Jewish servicemen, often religiously isolated with few if any other Jews in their unit and sometimes encountering prejudice, to recreate something of the intimacy of the synagogue and of their home, to engage emotionally if remotely with their families, to afford and derive mutual moral support from fellow Jews and if necessary to appropriately inter and mourn fallen Jewish comrades.

Jewish Law requires Jews to adhere to a diet which is kosher. Kashrut is the system for preparing and consuming foods which are acceptable for kosher consumption. Kashrut is observed by different people in any number of gradations. At the least it is the avoidance of prohibited foods such as bacon, pork, ham and shellfish and of consuming meat and milk dishes in the same meal. At the most it requires one to eat

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<sup>21</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp. 291-292, 334, 340. I discuss this in section 6.7.

<sup>22</sup> I discuss the demography of British Jewry at the start of both world wars in sections 9.1. and 11.1.

only in a kosher home or restaurant. On active military service the observance of kashrut is inevitably challenging. In both world wars some Jews did not make the attempt, some abstained from prohibited meats whilst accepting other meat which could not be kosher because it had not been prepared in a kosher manner and some existed on a diet of vegetables, bread and biscuits. In the Second World War fortnightly kosher food packages were available for observant Jews.<sup>23</sup> Today sophisticated kosher ration packs are available.

Chaplains did their best to help men who wished to do so to observe kashrut, and to do so themselves. Generally the military authorities went far beyond duty to accommodate Jewish soldiers who wished to do so. In so doing, they reflected the culture of attempting to accommodate the dietary requirements of non-Christian soldiers which had been established by the military authorities in South Asia in the years after the Indian Mutiny. When a Jewish chaplain was visiting by arrangement an officers' mess, the menu of the day for everybody might be something acceptable to him to save him any embarrassment.<sup>24</sup> In a Japanese prisoner of war camp in the Second World War the British cookhouse maintained a separate set of utensils for Captain David Arkush. In conditions of malnutrition it found for him acceptable foods, and somehow produced suitable foods to enable the Jewish soldiers to hold a Pesach Seder service.<sup>25</sup>

Sometimes the problem for the chaplain was not the authorities but the Jewish soldiers. In 1919 Rev. Arthur Barnett reflected that army life had produced a sort of Jewish anaesthesia. Barnett had twice arranged with the highly cooperative army

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<sup>23</sup> I discuss this in section 11.6.

<sup>24</sup> I discuss this in section 11.13.

<sup>25</sup> I discuss this in section 11.20.

authorities for labour companies of several hundred Jews to receive an alternative to bacon and pork. Almost all of the men protested at the withdrawal of their bacon ration, which had been their first opportunity in their lives to taste this forbidden fruit. Barnett had arranged for their day of rest to be Saturday, only to discover that many of the men lounged, smoked and played cards rather than attend a religious service.<sup>26</sup>

The Jewish religion does not encourage non-Jews to convert to Judaism. On occasion non-Jewish soldiers sought to do so for a variety of motives ranging from the deeply spiritual to the opportunistic, generally to obtain festival leave when it was available to Jewish soldiers. Jewish chaplains had to be alert to the opportunities for abuse whilst not unduly discouraging the truly sincere, and would sometimes liaise with the chaplain of the soldier's own faith.<sup>27</sup>

#### 6.6. The Rhythms of Jewish Life

There are a number of key rituals of the Jewish week and year. The Jewish day begins in the evening, and the Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday evening with a service. In the nature of military life, it was often easier for Jewish personnel to meet for a short service on a Friday evening than for a longer one on a Saturday morning. If this was able to be followed by some approximation to a traditional Sabbath evening meal, the experience could be therapeutic. The Sabbath ends twenty-five hours later at dusk on Saturday evening. Reflecting the Biblical narrative of the seventh phase of creation<sup>28</sup>, various forms of actual and Rabbinically interpreted

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<sup>26</sup> I discuss this in section 9.27.3.

<sup>27</sup> I cite at section 9.16. the case of a Jewish soldier who having enlisted as a Christian approached a Jewish chaplain in order, as the chaplain put it, to be "re-Judaised for Passover".

<sup>28</sup> Bereshit/Genesis, ch. 2, vv. 1-3. Shemot/Exodus, ch. 20, vv. 8-11. Devarim/Deuteronomy, ch. 5, vv. 12-15.

creative activity are forbidden on the Sabbath, including writing, carrying objects, the use of various forms of technology initiated by an electrical process, such as travelling in a vehicle and using a telephone, and walking more than a stated distance from one's habitation. Sabbath restrictions do however give place to the saving of life, which to some extent facilitated for observant Jews the inevitable difficulties of Sabbath observance whilst on active military service.

The Jewish year begins with the two-day festival of Rosh Hashanah, the New Year, with its synagogue services, which normally falls in September. On the tenth day is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which is a day of synagogue services beginning with the service in the evening known by the name of the prayer with which it begins, Kol Nidrei, meaning "all of our vows", which is intoned in a haunting melody. The observance of Yom Kippur requires five afflictions, of which the most recognised is fasting. Many Jews who may perhaps observe little else regard eating on Yom Kippur as the final taboo. Thus many soldiers attempted whilst on active service to observe the fast, which could conflict with the imperative to maintain their strength in the interests of the military efficacy of the unit. "On Rosh Hashanah the divine decree is inscribed, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed: .... [in the coming year] who shall live and who shall die, who at the measure of man's days and who before it; who by fire and who by water, who by the sword ...". To soldiers on active service this section of the liturgy and the haunting notes of the shofar were profoundly poignant.

Rosh Hashanah initiates a cycle of twelve days of Jewish festivals spread over a period of twenty-three days. The First World War began some seven weeks before Rosh Hashanah. For Jewish soldiers of all of the armies, even if they were quite detached from Jewish observance, mobilisation from August 1914 profoundly disrupted the rhythms of Jewish life. Sharing the Jewish festivals as best they might

with any other Jews with whom they found themselves serving seemed to quicken friendships. But there was not, and could not have been, anything analogous to the temporary brotherhood between the armies which broke out in the trenches of the western front during Christmas of 1914.<sup>29</sup> The Second World War began in Britain eleven days before Rosh Hashanah of 1939, with mobilisation for some in the ensuing weeks and similar disruption to Jewish life.

The eight-day festival of Chanukah, falling normally in December, commemorates amongst other things the victory of the Jewish fighting force, the Maccabees, over the Seleucid Greeks in Palestine in 165 BCE. It is not difficult to celebrate ritually, essentially with the lighting of one candle on the first night, two on the second and so on until the eighth, accompanied by the singing of the traditional hymn which is called *Mo-at Tsur*. It has long had a military connotation, which led Rev. Cohen to link the annual military service which he instituted in 1893 to Chanukah.<sup>30</sup>

More challenging to observe ritually is the eight-day festival of Passover or Pesach, which normally falls in April. It commemorates the Biblical narrative of the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, traditionally dated to 1230 BCE; departing in haste they did not have time for the dough in their bread to leaven, and so ate unleavened bread.<sup>31</sup> Thus for the whole of the festival Jews, including many who perhaps observe little else, eat only unleavened bread, known as matzo, and abjure any foodstuff, known as chametz, which contains yeast. Hence all eating and cooking utensils which have been in contact with chametz during the rest of the year have to be changed for Pesach. The festival begins with a narration in the home of the story of the Exodus,

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<sup>29</sup> Berkowitz, *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project, 1914-1933*, p.16.

<sup>30</sup> I discuss this in section 7.10.

<sup>31</sup> Shemot/Exodus.



set out in a text called the Haggadah - which means the story - with at the mid-point a meal. This is known as the Seder service, seder meaning sequence or order. It takes place on the first two evenings of the festival, focusses upon engaging the interest of the children and so is for many a powerful childhood memory.

Pesach represented a major challenge for Jewish chaplains. Preparations had to begin months ahead to try to obtain sufficient supplies of matzo, which in wartime conditions was often extremely difficult, and to hold Seder services, which involved securing an appropriate venue, arranging for the preparation of a meal and obtaining copies of the Haggadah and numerous other requisites. This was a major preoccupation of for example Rev. Isaac Levy in North Africa and the Middle East during the Second World War, seeking to obtain supplies from bakeries and suppliers in Palestine.<sup>32</sup> There are innumerable accounts, poignant to Jews, of improvised Seder services, held in the First World War in trenches on the western front and, ironically, in the Egyptian desert and in the Second in the Burmese jungle with matzo air-dropped for Jewish soldiers and in Japanese prisoner of war camps.<sup>33</sup>

Jewish chaplains devoted limitless effort to attempting to arrange services: for the Sabbath on Friday evenings even if it was not possible on Saturday mornings; for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, at least for Kol Nidrei; Passover Seder services; and during Chanukah brief gatherings of servicemen around dusk to light the candles and to sing Mo-at Tsur.<sup>34</sup> There is a moving account of a regiment of the Jewish Legion on the march through the Jordan Valley in 1918 on the evening of Yom Kippur, in which an American soldier who had been a synagogue cantor began

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<sup>32</sup> I discuss this in section 11.13.

<sup>33</sup> Some instances are cited in this thesis.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

quietly to intone the Kol Nidrei prayer and despite an order for silence the entire column took up the mournful chant.<sup>35</sup>

### 6.7. Characteristics of Jewish Chaplaincy

Jewish chaplaincy tested the ability and willingness both of a minority faith to accommodate itself within the essentially Protestant chaplaincy structure of the British military and of the military to accommodate that degree of religious difference. This formed part of a wider pattern of ecumenicalism and of more expansive visions for other faiths as well as Anglicanism. The phenomenon is exemplified by Roman Catholic chaplaincy, which never sat easily within the structure of the RChD. In 1920 the War Office concluded that the “dual system” of Protestant and Catholic chaplaincy administration which had obtained in France and Flanders during the Great War had been an embarrassment, whilst elsewhere the “unified system” had worked quite smoothly. In that light Bishop William Keatinge, who had been one of the senior Roman Catholic chaplains, accepted that Catholic chaplains should in any future war be part of a “unified administration of Chaplaincy Services” but that, because a dual system would not work satisfactorily in the field, this should be only for the duration of the war. However when the test came in 1940 the unified system proved unworkable. After the evacuation of the B.E.F. Catholic chaplaincy seceded from the unified system and came to be administered by a hierarchy of senior Catholic chaplains. Although relations between individual chaplains were usually good, tensions arose during the war, including over burials and over marriages between British soldiers and local women because of the Roman Catholic insistence upon marriage in a Roman Catholic church with the expectation of raising children of

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<sup>35</sup> I discuss this in section 9.29.

the marriage in that faith. Protestant chaplains were forbidden, as they had been during the First World War, to use Roman Catholic churches, which proved a great inconvenience in the European campaign from 1944 which was fought largely in areas which were predominantly Roman Catholic.<sup>36</sup>

For Jewish chaplains these inter-denominational Christian issues did not arise. Nor did the Catholic imperative for clergy to attend a man at his last moments, which had impelled some Catholic clergy to position themselves in the front line in the First World War. Few in number, it was easier for Jewish than for Roman Catholic chaplains to adapt themselves into the army chaplaincy structure. Chaplaincy is a lonely responsibility, and for isolated Jewish chaplains that structure could provide support. They enjoyed much ecumenical support, during the First World War from the Army, the AChD and the YMCA, with transport, huts, the facilitation of religious services, on occasion the conduct of funerals and in 1916 the remarkable appointment by the Australian YMCA of a Jewish representative.<sup>37</sup> During the Second World War the support to the Jewish chaplains derived from the Army, the RACHD and the RAF with transport, kosher food including matza for Passover and the establishment of synagogues on Army and RAF bases.<sup>38</sup>

As the first non-Christian chaplaincy, Jewish chaplaincy presented its own challenges. Like all forms of military chaplaincy, Jewish chaplaincy involves every form of religious and spiritual support. In counselling and supporting soldiers, corresponding with them and their families, comforting the afflicted, visiting the sick and injured, conducting funerals and consecrating synagogues and cemeteries, it is

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<sup>36</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp. 278, 291-292, 334, 340.

<sup>37</sup> I discuss this in sections 9.5., 9.17. and 9.20.

<sup>38</sup> I discuss this in sections 11.6. and 11.22.

not singular. Like their Christian counterparts, Jewish chaplains could have, even in normally inevitably short encounters, a profound influence upon the spiritual and moral welfare of a soldier. Jewish soldiers were frequently isolated from other Jews, so that, perhaps more than was sometimes possible within the larger Protestant ministry, Jewish chaplaincy focussed upon the personal welfare of a Jewish soldier and forging a personal relationship with him. Jewish soldiers were sometimes few enough in number to become known to their chaplains individually; Rev. Isaac Levy recorded having been delighted to meet in Europe some soldiers whom he had known in the Middle East. Conversely Jewish soldiers who wished to see a chaplain were more likely than their Christian colleagues to lack a visit from one and thus more likely to feel neglected.<sup>39</sup>

Jewish chaplaincy also comprises holding services wherever and whenever possible, facilitating to whatever degree possible the observance of the Sabbath and festivals and trying to create opportunities for Jewish soldiers to spend time together for mutual moral support among fellow Jews with whom they could empathise about their families and their Jewish identity. Judaism regards the relationship between every individual Jew and the Almighty as direct and personal and not dependent upon any priestly intermediary or intercessor. It has therefore no concept of priestly confession nor of absolution. Whilst prayer can be individual and offered at any time, Jewish communal prayers, recited three times a day and more on Sabbaths and festivals, require a quorum or minyan of ten adult male Jews, which chaplains often struggled to assemble. This is particularly important to enable somebody to fulfil the

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<sup>39</sup> I discuss this in section 11.17.

obligation, which many take very seriously, to recite the traditional prayer, known as the Kaddish, on the anniversary of the death of a relative.

Unlike their Christian colleagues, who were often attached to a unit or to a hospital or medical unit and ministered to its members or patients, Jewish chaplains have almost always had first to find Jewish soldiers. In both world wars Jewish soldiers were often scattered as sole individuals or in small groups throughout numerous far flung units in inaccessible locations. To reach them chaplains had sometimes to travel vast distances. In the Second World War they were more often provided with transport. In the First they had more often to hop on and off lorries as best they might, to cycle, those who could to ride horses and otherwise to walk. Rev. Louis Morris observed in 1918 that the Prophet Jeremiah, who was active in the four decades before the Babylonian exile, had as an army chaplain had the same problem.<sup>40</sup>

For chaplains seeking out Jewish soldiers, surnames could be a false friend. Some soldiers bore the English surnames attributed to their immigrant parents and grandparents on their arrival at ports by immigration officers struggling to understand them in a first encounter of mutual incomprehension. In the First World War many people of German background, both Jewish and non-Jewish, including the Royal Family, sought to avert prejudice by adopting anglicised names. In the case of Jews the names which they adopted were intended to avoid any indication of Jewish identity, although sometimes through lack of knowledge they did not do so.<sup>41</sup> Men could have Jewish sounding names without being Jewish, and some enterprising non-Jewish soldiers attempted to exploit their Jewish sounding names in order to

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<sup>40</sup> I discuss this in section 9.27.4.

<sup>41</sup> Bering, *The Stigma of Names*, p.29.

obtain leave over Jewish festivals.<sup>42</sup> In the Second World War Jews especially aircrew were sometimes advised in case of capture to anglicise their names and to Christianise their identity discs. In the more ethnically diverse United States, better equipped at ports to understand immigrants from many lands, immigrants tended rather more to adhere to their family names, so identifying Jewish soldiers could be easier for American Jewish chaplains than for their British counterparts.

Especially in the Second World War, complaints by Jewish soldiers that they rarely if ever saw a Jewish chaplain were frequent. There were never remotely enough Jewish chaplains in either world war, nor could there ever have been. The British Jewish community, of perhaps some 250,000 - 300,000 people in 1914 and some 350,000 in 1939, was too small and had too few ministers to be able to produce enough chaplains, especially for the global reach of British forces in the Second World War.<sup>43</sup> The distances which ministers had often to travel to reach an isolated Jewish soldier or two made their visits to any one soldier, who was always liable to be relocated without warning, a rarity. Hence the significance of “unofficial” chaplaincy.

### 6.8. Attitudes to Jews

Colin Holmes wrote of a continuous tradition of antisemitism in Britain, and of an undercurrent of hostility to Jews transcending class and party which was stimulated by the immigration of Jewish refugees, from Russia between 1881 and 1914 and from Germany in the 1930s.<sup>44</sup> There is disagreement between historians about the effects of the First World War upon British Jewry. David Cesarani wrote that “For the

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<sup>42</sup> I discuss this in section 9.16.

<sup>43</sup> I discuss in sections 9.1. and 11.1. the numbers of Jews who served in both world wars.

<sup>44</sup> Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society*.

small, tightly knit élite of Anglo-Jewry, even more intensely than for the élite of the country as a whole, the war was a demographic catastrophe". It deprived British Jewry of capable young men who might have assumed the reins of communal government; they had usually been officers, amongst whom the casualties had been heaviest, and their loss led to a social revolution which transformed British Jewry.<sup>45</sup> This related to the internal structure of the British Jewish community. Considering its status within wider society he described British Jewry as *An Embattled Minority* and encapsulated the theme of a pioneering article in 1990 in the words "The war years savagely eroded the status of Jews in Britain."<sup>46</sup> Elsewhere he wrote that "The Great War was a disaster for the Jews in Britain. As well as the death and destruction it brought, the war eroded their status and stoked antipathies towards them.... Everything about the war had conspired to set Jews apart, with grim consequences for decades to come."<sup>47</sup> Geoffrey Alderman took a similar view: "The outbreak of war in 1914 led to a deterioration in the social position of Jews, and especially of Jewish aliens, in Britain."<sup>48</sup> Edward Madigan wrote that in the final year of the conflict English Jews had to contend with a new and more overtly political form of antisemitism that would become more pronounced after the Armistice. This anti-Jewish rhetoric consistently challenged the very Englishness of Anglo-Jewry and was particularly damaging and hurtful to the assimilated elites whose families were

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<sup>45</sup> Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo- Jewry*, p. 121.

<sup>46</sup> Cesarani, *An Embattled Minority: the Jews in Britain During the First World War*, in Kushner and Lunn (eds.) *The Politics of Marginality*, pp. 61-81 at 75.

<sup>47</sup> Cesarani: *Jews in Britain During the First World War*, in *Shemot* magazine, issue 242, June 2014.

<sup>48</sup> Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, p. 235.

well established in England by 1914.<sup>49</sup> By contrast William Rubenstein wrote that no event in modern British history so positively affected the acculturation of British Jewry as the First World War; the socialising effects of the war have almost invariably been addressed in terms of the hostility which the war engendered towards radical and migrant Jews; and very little has been written upon the effects of military experience upon Jews, including antisemitism.<sup>50</sup> Although Rubenstein may himself not sufficiently address antisemitism, his last proposition is certainly correct: Anthony Julius, for example, in a work of more than eight hundred pages on antisemitism in England devotes one and a half pages to the First World War, and without addressing the position within the military at all.<sup>51</sup>

My focus on chaplaincy is narrower than that of those historians, who do not address the Jewish experience within the military. As to attitudes to Jews, I have encountered in both world wars some evidence of individual instances of antisemitism within the military and much evidence of support and facilitation at official levels for Jewish religious practice and Jewish chaplaincy. As the Senior British Jewish Chaplain in the First World War, Adler encountered at all levels only support for Jews and for Jewish chaplaincy. He took a eulogistic view of the virtual absence of antisemitism within the army and viewed the war as providing an opportunity for Jews to educate their fellows about the tenets of Judaism. No doubt reflecting his own experiences, he wrote:

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<sup>49</sup> Madigan and Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience: Edward Madigan, Thou Hast Given Us Home and Freedom, Mother England: Anglo-Jewish Gratitude, Patriotism and Service During and After the First World War*, pp. 307-333 at 332-333.

<sup>50</sup> Rubenstein, *A History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World*, pp. 194-197.

<sup>51</sup> Julius, *Trials of the Diaspora. A History of Anti-Semitism in England*, pp. 286-287.



I have frequently been asked whether there were any signs of anti-Semitism in the life of the great British Army, and I say without the slightest hesitation, that whatever indication of ill-feeling there was towards the Jew was so small as to be entirely negligible. The Christian soldier was warmly attached to his Jewish 'pal', and the relations between the soldiers of all denominations were remarkably cordial. I received frequent letters from Christian soldiers telling me about their Jewish friends in most affectionate terms, and, almost without exception, Jewish men spoke very highly of their treatment by their brothers-in-arms.<sup>52</sup>

Addressing Jewish troops in November 1917, the Australian Rev. David Freedman, who served as a chaplain from December 1915 until December 1917 at the Dardanelles, in Egypt and on the Western front, stated that he had not come across one case of discrimination against a Jewish soldier on account of his faith. This may however have been for the sake of their morale for, once back in Australia in July 1918 he wrote:

I have found instance after instance in which sons of Israel camouflaged their identity both in the Australian and in the British Army. Why have they done so? One of our Jewish V.C.'s had originally enlisted as a member of another denomination. It was only after he had won the Victoria Cross that he declared himself as belonging to the Jewish faith. But most of those who have hidden their identity have done so because they feared they would be subjected to prejudice and not have a fair deal. <sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> BJBH, pp.44-46.

<sup>53</sup> Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, pp. 92, 353 notes 106, 107. Gladwin, *Captains of the Soul*, p. 69.

In the First World War people could be suspicious of the language of Yiddish speaking immigrants and could suspect immigrants of Bolshevik sympathies.<sup>54</sup> One German speaking platoon officer who got drunk and roamed around no man's land shouting abuse at the enemy was suspected of giving away secrets and a sergeant was detailed to watch him.<sup>55</sup> In 1916 the initial exclusion of Russian Jewish immigrants from conscription gave rise to resentment.<sup>56</sup> Antisemitism could extend to soldiers from families established in Britain; even an officer who although born Jewish had been baptised as an Anglican, Gilbert Frankau, encountered it.<sup>57</sup> So did Isaac Rosenberg, who wrote of it in his poem *The Jew* and his play *Moses*: "My being a Jew makes it bad amongst these wretches."<sup>58</sup> When Jewish soldiers were granted leave, sometimes of a week, for Jewish festivals, other soldiers could be resentful.<sup>59</sup> A restaurant in Leeds refused to serve Jews, including Sergeant Issy Smith V.C. when he went there in uniform with his V.C. ribbon. Protests followed, and in an editorial the *Jewish World* imagined that this sort of thing was exceptional.<sup>60</sup>

Second Lieutenant Julius (Jack) Israel Goldston, whose father was a chaplain, wrote in June 1915. "I have no hesitation in stating from personal observation and experience that, from the time of the beginning of the war, no Jewish man, be he

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<sup>54</sup> Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, pp. 174, 298 nn. 24, 25.

<sup>55</sup> Pendlebury, *Portraying "the Jew"*, p. 66.

<sup>56</sup> I discuss this in section 9.29.

<sup>57</sup> Pendlebury, *Portraying "the Jew"*, pp. 67-69.

<sup>58</sup> Pendlebury, *Portraying "the Jew"*, pp. 66-67, 158. Ewence and Grady (eds.), *From War to Peace: Kushner, Memory, Storytelling and Minorities: A Case Study of Jews in Britain and the First World War*, pp. 227-251 at p. 242. Rosenberg's application early in 1918 to join the all-Jewish Jewish Legion was never answered, and he was killed on 1 April 1918.

<sup>59</sup> Pendlebury, *Portraying "the Jew"*, p. 69.

<sup>60</sup> JW 27/10/1915, p. 9.

officer or private, who behaves as a Jew and an Englishman, should have the slightest ground for complaint of the treatment meted out to him.” He cited his own commanding officer who, immediately on hearing of the death of his brother, had granted him leave of absence to observe the necessary period of mourning.<sup>61</sup>

As the allure of fascism grew in the 1930s it was comforting for some to absorb a narrative that the war which they did not want to fight and which some thought that they should not be fighting was provoked for their own benefit by international, fifth column and (depending upon their political perspective) communist or capitalist Jews. These attitudes dissipated as the Second World War progressed but never entirely disappeared. Early in 1940 there were widespread rumours that some Jews who had reached Britain from Holland ostensibly as refugees had been coerced by the Germans into acting as spies. Mass Observation recorded in May 1940 that:

The always latent antagonism to the alien and the foreigner began to flare up. Nearly everyone, as previous research has shown, is latently somewhat anti-semitic and somewhat anti-alien. But ordinarily it is not the done thing to express such sentiments publicly. The news from Holland made it the done thing all of a sudden. ...Sir John Anderson's new restrictions on aliens corresponded with this feeling and were therefore widely welcomed.

The allegation of the First World War that Jews were under-represented in the armed forces was revived in the Second. Two new canards emerged: that Jews crowded into air-raid shelters and underground tube stations, and that a disproportionate number of them were black market racketeers. The Board of Deputies went so far as to commission investigations, which found that in districts where Jews lived in large

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<sup>61</sup> JC 25/6/1915, p. 23.

numbers they behaved just as well as British people as a whole, and that the numbers of Jews and non-Jews prosecuted for black market offences were proportionate to the numbers of Jewish and non-Jewish traders as a whole. A miscellany of other allegations were voiced against Jews; one observer noted that the quickest way to make a thing unpopular was to call it Jewish. Yet there was a certain degree of self-restraint of expression as the war went on and horrific evidence of the nature of Nazi antisemitism emerged. Anthony Julius considers that antisemitism was part of the texture of everyday life, not a mobilised sentiment liable to be translated into action. George Orwell articulated this, midway through the war:

There is a certain amount of anti-semitism. One is constantly coming on pockets of it, not violent, but pronounced enough to be disquieting. The Jews are supposed to dodge military service, to be the worst offenders on the Black Market etc. etc. I have heard this kind of talk even from country people who had probably never seen a Jew in their lives. But no one wants actually to *do* anything to the Jews.<sup>62</sup>

Antisemitism within the Polish Army stationed in Britain in the Second World War became so serious as to lead in 1944 to a near-mutiny and to cause Polish Jewish soldiers to seek transfer into the British Army. The matter was raised in the British Parliament.<sup>63</sup> Nothing similar ever occurred within British forces.

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<sup>62</sup> Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp. 87-90, 116-117. Julius, *Trials of the Diaspora*, pp. 320-328.

<sup>63</sup> *Hansard*, 6 April 1944, vol 398, cols. 2261-2303; 26 April 1944, vol. 399, cols. 748-752; 28 April 1944, vol. 399, cols. 1159-1168. Collins, *Poles and Jews*.

## 7. THE GENESIS OF BRITISH JEWISH CHAPLAINCY

### 7.1. In Antiquity

In Judaism the military chaplain is not a modern concept. Journeying in the desert after the exodus from Egypt the Israelites were obliged to create an army in order to defend themselves against attackers. The armies of Biblical Israel were accompanied by the *Cohen le'Milchamah* – the priest for war:

When you go to battle against your enemies, and see horses, war chariots and an army larger than yours, do not be afraid of them, since God your Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, is with you. When you approach the place of battle, the priest shall step forward and speak to the people. He shall say to them, "Listen, Israel, today you are about to wage war against your enemies. Do not be faint-hearted, do not be afraid, do not panic, and do not break ranks before them. God your Lord is the One who is going with you. He will fight for you against your enemies, and He will deliver you." <sup>1</sup>

### 7.2. Background to Jews in the British Military

In Britain the Test Act of 1673 required any person holding any commission, civil or military, under the Crown, to take the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England. Subsequent Test and Corporation Acts required grantees of a commission to make a declaration "upon the true faith of a Christian". Over the centuries some significant Jewish names occur amongst those of naval and army officers, some from Jewish military dynasties, clearly making such accommodation

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<sup>1</sup> Devarim/Deuteronomy, ch. 20, vv. 1-9. Snape, *God and the British Soldier*, p. 94.

with their ancestral religion as they might.<sup>2</sup> The Test Acts did not apply to private soldiers, but no religion other than Christianity was recognised within the military. A number of Jewish soldiers are recorded, some of whom contrived to retain their identity as Jews. The Test and Corporation Acts were repealed in 1829, when it became legally possible for Jews to obtain a commission in the military (below the ranks of rear admiral and major general) without making a declaration “upon the true faith of a Christian”, and some did so.<sup>3</sup>

There were Jews in the navy and the army during the Napoleonic Wars and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> Many were far removed from Judaism, including boys from orphanages and industrial training schools. There was no nineteenth century cadre of professional Jewish officers in Britain such as existed in France, whom Penslar<sup>5</sup> describes as uniformed career civil servants. Soldiers were listed in British Army records as Church of England, Nonconformists or “Other Religions”. Colonel Albert Goldsmid, a colourful figure who discovered only in later life that he was Jewish, worked when he became a member of the headquarters staff for the recognition of Judaism in the official list of denominations which could be recorded on attestation. So, at the other extremity of the military hierarchy, did Private Woolf Cohen of the Fifth Lancers, who with a group of other Jewish soldiers insisted upon reporting themselves as Jews. In 1886 Queen’s Regulations were changed to specify for the first time that Judaism was recognised for the purposes of public worship in the

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<sup>2</sup> JHS, vol. 15, 1939-1945, pp.1-29, Cecil Roth, *Jews in the Defence of Britain – Thirteenth to Nineteenth Centuries*. Roth records that one of these dynasties, the Gompertz family, did so to the point of producing a chaplain – meaning a Christian chaplain – who may perhaps be whimsically regarded as the first “Jewish” chaplain in the British army. Rubin, *140 Jewish Marshals*, pp. 223-244.

<sup>3</sup> I consider this in sections 3.1.and 4.

<sup>4</sup> I consider their numbers in section 7.7.

<sup>5</sup> Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, ch.3.

armed forces and that Jews were permitted to be classified separately as a distinct religious body.<sup>6</sup> Only nineteen men chose to give their religion as Jewish, whilst many more did not do so.<sup>7</sup> Although Christian chaplaincy was by then well established in the army, there was no facility for the appointment of Jewish Chaplains.<sup>8</sup> In 1883 and again in 1884 the London Committee of Deputies of the British Jews (later to become the Board of Deputies of British Jews) secured from the War Office dispensation for Jewish soldiers to observe the week of Passover and the other Jewish Holy Days.<sup>9</sup>

### 7.3. The Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue

A year after its creation in 1870, the United Synagogue formed in May 1871 a Visitation Committee for “the visitation and religious supervision of Jewish inmates of Workhouses, Asylums, Hospitals, Reformatories, Prisons, etc.”<sup>10</sup> The “visitors” were largely the Jewish ministers in London who were then performing visitation work.

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<sup>6</sup> The year of formal recognition of Judaism in Queen’s Regulations is given as 1886 by Rev. F.L. Cohen, *Jews in the Army and Militia* in JC 22/4/1904, p.10 (section 7.4., n. 22); by Roth, *Jews in the Defence of Britain – Thirteenth to Nineteenth Centuries* in JHS, vol. 15, 1939-1945, pp. 1-29 at 26; by Kadish, *A Good Jew and a Good Englishman*, pp. 3, 57-58; and by Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, pp. 66 (citing Kadish, p.280 n. 90), 86. However the year is given as 1889 by Smyth, *In this Sign Conquer*, pp. 214-216; by Rabinowitz, re Cohen (section 7.4., n. 17); by Henry Morris in *The Ajax Chronicles*; and by Oztorah, Apple (section 7.4., n. 17). Cohen (section 7.4.), who states 1886, was perhaps best placed to know.

<sup>7</sup> I record at section 7.7. the numbers of Jewish soldiers serving between 1876 and 1903.

<sup>8</sup> JHS, vol. 15, 1939-1945, pp.1-29, Cecil Roth, *Jews in the Defence of Britain – Thirteenth to Nineteenth Centuries*. Snape, *Clergy under Fire* generally, including p. 201.

<sup>9</sup> Pollins, *Economic History of the Jews*, pp. 142, 279 n.2. Emanuel, *A Century and a Half of Jewish History*, pp.117, 119.

<sup>10</sup> Newman, *The United Synagogue*, p.81. LMA, ACC/2712/01/079, p. 1 (“VC/1/1”). The eight successive minute books of the Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue from 1871 until 1959, numbered 1, 1A, 2, 3, 3A, 4, 5 and 6, are designated at the London Metropolitan Archives as ACC/2712/01/079-086. For ease of reference I refer to them respectively as VC/1, VC/1A, VC/2, etc., and e.g. pages 1-2 of VC/1 as VC/1/1-2.

Over time the work of the Visitation Committee came to embrace schools, infirmaries, convalescent homes, reformatories, boys' training schools, industrial schools for boys and for girls, parochial district schools, discharged prisoners and lunatics as well as the military. A Ladies' Visiting Committee was established in January 1884.<sup>11</sup> A concept of *noblesse oblige*, sometimes patronising to contemporary sensitivities, underpins the work of the Committee. The emphasis throughout is upon the Jewish community being seen to be able and willing to undertake the responsibilities of good citizenship. It is the background against which the initiative for Jewish chaplaincy derived from the Jewish community.

#### 7.4. Reverend Francis Lyon Cohen (14 November 1862 - 26 April 1934)

Hard lessons learned by the British Army during the Crimean War led to the establishment in 1855 of a vast army camp with adequate training facilities near the village of Aldershot. The needs of its military population could not be met by the village, so the realisation of this business opportunity soon attracted a few Jewish families "of the humbler class" such as shopkeepers, who came to constitute a Jewish community. One of its eight founder members in 1858 was Woolf Henry Cohen, whose family had come from a village near Vilnius in Lithuania and who is variously described as a dealer, marine store dealer, rag merchant, pawnbroker, general merchant and tobacco manufacturer. Another was the Phillips family, who originated from Warsaw and had moved from Portsmouth to Aldershot in 1855. Woolf Cohen was to marry Harriett Phillips. In time the community established a

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<sup>11</sup> VC/1/119.



synagogue and a burial ground. At its height, in 1896, it numbered fifty-four people, including women and children but not including soldiers.<sup>12</sup>

Working class Jews of Dutch and German origin joined the army in sufficient numbers that, with the encouragement of the small Jewish community in Aldershot and the initiative of the Board of Deputies, commanding officers in Aldershot were instructed in divisional orders “to facilitate the attendance of men of this persuasion” at Saturday and Holy Day services at the local civilian synagogue, and arrangements came to be made in the 1880s for Jewish soldiers to have leave on the Jewish Holy Days. The few Jewish families living in Aldershot probably took an interest in the welfare of those Jewish soldiers who attended.<sup>13</sup> Attendance at services was voluntary, and so sometimes “reached the vanishing point” until in 1891 the commanding officer of the 1<sup>st</sup> Scottish Rifles (the Cameronians) stationed at Aldershot, Colonel Laye, made it compulsory, as it was for men of other denominations.

There being in this smart regiment several promising young Jews, they are paraded every Sabbath morning and marched, under the command of a non-commissioned officer, to the local services, which are held at the residence of the senior Jewish townsman. Thus a ‘synagogue parade’, in the honourable military sense of the expression, has at length become an institution in England, as well as in some continental countries.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Pollins, *Economic History of the Jews*, p.88. Slowe, *The Foundation of Aldershot Synagogue*. AJHS, 1995, Apple (section 7.4., n. 17), pp. 666-7.

<sup>13</sup> Pollins, *Economic History of the Jews*, p. 142. Slowe, *The Foundation of Aldershot Synagogue*. JC 8/9/1882, p.13; 15/9/1882, p. 4; 18/9/1885, p. 12; 13/3/1891, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> JC 13/3/1891, p.5: an article under the heading *Notes of the Week*, the first sentence impliedly citing Colonel Laye.

Woolf and Harriett Cohen had a son, Francis Lyon Cohen. Born on 14 November 1862, and later described as “one of the oldest natives in the town of Aldershot”,<sup>15</sup>, he developed from an impressionable early age a fascination for matters military. In 1910 he was to write:

I had noticed, in my boyhood near Aldershot Camp, that Jewish soldiers and sailors almost invariably concealed their origin because of outside prejudices, and still more through our own people’s feeling about the difficulties in observing certain religious duties, and the dislike of all uniforms so natural in our people who had come to England from countries where authority condones such cruel oppression.<sup>16</sup>

Emerging from Jews’ College as a Reverend, Cohen served as the minister in South Hackney in London from 1883 to 1885 and then for a year in Dublin before in 1886 taking up an appointment at the Borough New Synagogue in South London.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> JC 13/3/1891, p.5.

<sup>16</sup> AJHS, 1995, Apple (section 7.4., n. 17), p.667. Although a Jewish aversion to uniforms and military service was widely believed, it may not have been historically correct, as I discuss in sections 2.1. and 3.2.

<sup>17</sup> On Francis Lyon Cohen, see generally: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 5, column 670; JRChD, January 1936, volume V, no. 41, pp.199-202, L. Rabinowitz, *The First Jewish Chaplain to the Forces* (herein “Rabinowitz re Cohen”); <http://geoffreyshisler.com/biographies-2/francis-lyon-cohen/> (henceforth “Shisler”); AJHS, 1995, vol. 12, part 4, *Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot*, including chapter 4, *Military Chaplain*, by Rabbi Raymond Apple ( herein “AJHS, 1995, Apple”), esp. pp. 666-8, 672-3, 677-680, 683, 697-9; <http://www.oztorah.com/2010/09/francis-l-cohen-britains-first-jewish-chaplain/> by Rabbi Raymond Apple (herein “Oztorah, Apple”); *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 8, p.52 by Suzanne D. Rutland, and <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cohen-francis-lyon-5710/text9655>; Smyth, *In this Sign Conquer*, pp. 214-216; Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, p.66; Kadish, *A Good Jew and a Good Englishman*, p. 58; Morris, *The Ajax Chronicles*, p. 107; Rosenbaum, *The History of The Borough Synagogue*, pp. 22-23, 30; Jolles, *A Short History of the Jews of Northampton*. I consider Cohen’s background in conjunction with Adler’s in section 7.9.

From the creation of the Aldershot camp, churches had been built there for the troops with accommodation for their incumbent chaplains. Prevalent alcoholism and the lack of suitable amenities for soldiers led religious and other groups to establish soldiers' institutes and homes in garrison towns in the 1880s.<sup>18</sup> It was against this background that Jewish chaplaincy developed in Aldershot.

Cohen's self-motivated ministry to Jewish soldiers at Aldershot started in 1891. He occasionally visited Aldershot, and no doubt discovered Jewish soldiers.<sup>19</sup> Lord Rothschild was the President of the United Synagogue from 1879 until his death in 1915 and was regarded as the lay head of the Jewish community in Britain.<sup>20</sup> Lord Rothschild gave Cohen a letter of introduction to General Sir Evelyn Wood, commanding the military camp at Aldershot. In 1892 the War Office approved Cohen's appointment as a civilian Jewish Officiating Chaplain to the Forces and Chaplain to the Volunteer Force.<sup>21</sup>

Writing in the *Jewish Chronicle* some twelve years later in 1904 on *Jews in the Army and Militia*, Cohen summarised the history of Jews in the army up to the formal recognition of Judaism as a denomination in 1886. He then narrated how and, reflecting the contemporary Jewish imperative of demonstrating communal civic duty, why he had initiated military chaplaincy:

Then their numbers began soon to increase. In 1892 my attention was drawn to the, as yet, unprecedented fact that there were six Jews serving in one

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<sup>18</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp.101, 118, 142.

<sup>19</sup> JC, 13/3/1891, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> See, e.g. Newman, *The United Synagogue*, generally, and Sacks, *Community of Faith*, p. 34.

<sup>21</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp. 201, 390 n. 211, based on Rabinowitz re Cohen. AJHS, 1995, Apple, *The Jewish military chaplaincy in Australia*, pp. 677-680, 737 n. 70. Smyth, *In this Sign Conquer*, p. 215.

regiment, that shall be nameless, then stationed in Aldershot. These young fellows, however, had no one of their own community to look to as a guide, philosopher and friend, and, unhappily, made a lamentable exhibition of themselves, for, one after the other, they deserted. This disgraceful conduct suggested to me the desirability of endeavouring to establish touch between Jewish soldiers and their community, with a view to the augmentation of their self-respect, and the consequent credit accruing to the communal name. The public-spirit of the Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue and of the handful of Jews then living in Aldershot enabled an arrangement of a modest character to be inaugurated; and the great augmentation alike in the number of Jews serving and in their reputation as soldiers, which very soon ensued, and has since continued, has well repaid any efforts put forth with these aims. The first official communication I received, in October 1892, informed me of my recognition as Jewish Officiating Chaplain; the second came from the officer commanding the regiment previously alluded to, who wrote that “at present I have no men of your religion in my battalion – the last one I had deserted about a week ago.” I accordingly began with a military congregation of one solitary Jewish regular, by an interesting coincidence one who had come from the neighbourhood of my own synagogue in London, and had been known to me as a pupil in the local Jewish Schools. In the passage of years I have since then come into contact with several hundreds, soldiers in every way a credit to their uniform.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> JC 22/4/1904, p.10. I reproduce rather than summarise this extract from the article for its colour and its indication of Cohen’s motivation. I consider the numbers of the “several hundreds” of soldiers in section 7.7.

Assisted by the small local Jewish community amongst whom he had grown up, Cohen sought out and befriended Jewish soldiers. He wrote a letter to the *Jewish Chronicle* asking relatives of serving Jewish soldiers to contact him with information about them so that those soldiers could as far as possible share in the arrangements for their religious welfare.<sup>23</sup> Starting on Sunday 30 October 1892, he conducted services for them, scheduled in Divisional Orders for the same time as the army Church of England service. These Sunday services continued until 1899, when it became possible to move them to Saturdays. With his own Borough community to minister to, Cohen arranged for senior students from Jews' College in London, where he had studied, to go to Aldershot for the Sabbath to conduct services. This too may have been unprecedented, and perhaps initiated what became the procedure of despatching students and other volunteers to minister on Sabbaths and festivals to widely dispersed Jewish communities, of which British Jewry had many more in the 1890s than with its gradual geographical consolidation it has today, including to military centres.

In September 1892 Rev. Simeon Singer replied in the *Jewish Chronicle* to an enquiry whether young men could observe Judaism if they joined the army. Explaining that Judaism enjoins patriotism as well as for other religious reasons, he encouraged them to do so.<sup>24</sup> This triggered a spirited correspondence over several months, with letters from ministers, serving and retired soldiers and anonymous correspondents.<sup>25</sup> Cohen urged the Jewish community to be worthily represented in the armed forces.

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<sup>23</sup> JC 4/11/1892, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> JC 2/9/1892, p.12.

<sup>25</sup> JC 2/9/1892, p.12; 9/9/1892, p.7; 16/9/1892, pp.12-13; 23/9/1892, p.7; 30/9/1892, p. 8; 7/10/1892, p. 6; 21/10/1892, p. 8; 4/11/1892, pp. 9-10; 11/11/1892, p. 17; 18/11/1892, p. 8; 25/11/1892, p. 8; 16/12/1892, pp.15-16.

He noted that there were presently only nineteen declared Jewish soldiers and maybe as many again undeclared, whereas proportionate to the population of the UK there should be 420.<sup>26</sup>

Cohen realised that many of the Jewish soldiers preferred to “follow the big drum” by attending the general Church of England parades. One of the Christian Ritualist Guilds of the mid-Victorian period, the Guild of the Holy Standard, had been operating in Aldershot since 1873, and held an annual “festival service” at St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, which had become a fixture in the Guild calendar.<sup>27</sup> So it may have been that, soon after his chaplaincy appointment, this event led Cohen towards the idea of an annual Chanukah Military Service in London for Jewish soldiers. Or the idea may have been that of Major William Schonfield, a career officer who commanded the 3/19<sup>th</sup> Battalion, London Regiment, joined the Reserve in 1911 and was recalled to service during the First World War. “The idea of holding annual Chanukah parades is due to him, and was conceived for the purpose of attracting the Jewish youth to the Colours”.<sup>28</sup> In any event a lively correspondence in numerous issues of the *Jewish Chronicle* between July and December of 1893 on religious observance by Jewish soldiers led to the suggestion of a Chanukah service and also to criticism of the suggestion by those who felt that religion should remain a private matter and not become a militarily institutionalised one.

A Chanukah service was held on 10 December 1893 in Cohen’s own Borough Synagogue. It was for Jewish Volunteers, and almost one hundred attended. The volunteers paraded before entering the synagogue on a bugle call. Cohen conducted

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<sup>26</sup> JC 9/9/1892, p. 7.

<sup>27</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, p.143.

<sup>28</sup> JC, 11/6/1915, p. 10.

the service, and his wife acted as accompanist on the pianoforte. In his sermon Cohen referred to the weekly services which he had been holding for Jewish soldiers at Aldershot. Refreshments were served after the service.<sup>29</sup> The *Jewish Chronicle* reported the event fully, referred to the difficulties and obstacles which Cohen had encountered including those raised by some Jewish volunteer officers, reproduced his sermon and in a long editorial applauded the event.<sup>30</sup> Not all Jewish soldiers welcomed the gathering. When Cohen invited the senior Jewish officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Francis A. Lucas, who was the Supply and Transport Officer of the South London Volunteer Brigade, to command the parade that was to be held prior to the service, he declined on the ground that he had a strong objection to mixing up religion with military matters. This view did not however prevail, and the Chanukah service became institutionalised as an annual event.<sup>31</sup>

#### 7.5. Military and Naval Visitation

The first engagement of the Visitation Committee with the military appears in the record of the Annual Conference of the Visitation Committee to review its work during 1892, which was held on Monday February 13, 1893 at the Central Synagogue Chambers in the West End of London. This was the synagogue of Rev. Michael Adler, who was present at this meeting and who was later to play the key role in Jewish military chaplaincy. Having been a visitor for the Visitation Committee for three years or more, Cohen must have decided to bring military visitation within the ambit of the Committee's work. According to the record of the conference:

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<sup>29</sup> JC, 15/12/1893, pp. 4-5, 11-13. Penslar seems not to be correct in stating in *Jews and the Military* at p. 78 that this first Chanukah service took place at the Central Synagogue and was attended by about fifty soldiers in uniform.

<sup>30</sup> JC 15/12/1893, pp. 4-5.

<sup>31</sup> I discuss this in section 7.10.

The Rev. Francis L. Cohen spoke on the new branch of work he had undertaken in connection with looking after Jewish soldiers. He informed the meeting that instances of insults offered to some Jewish soldiers by their Christian comrades had been severely punished, and that the request made by a Jewish soldier for transfer to a select corps at Aldershot was at once granted by the Duke of Cambridge, although transfers generally took a considerable time and involved much trouble. A good impression had also been caused by arrangements made between Jewish and Christian soldiers for exchanges of duty on their respective Sabbaths. Mr Cohen acknowledged the ready sympathy and assistance his efforts had received from the few Jewish families residing at Aldershot.<sup>32</sup>

The topic of military chaplaincy was pursued at subsequent annual conferences of the Visitation Committee. Between 1894 and 1897 Cohen paid between twenty-five and forty visits a year to troops at Aldershot and conducted services. Over that period the number of avowed Jews in the Army increased from twelve to fifty-one.<sup>33</sup>

Through Cohen's commitment the chaplaincy visitation at Aldershot had become established. An agreement was entered into on 8 November 1897 between the Visitation Committee and the Aldershot Hebrew Congregation recording arrangements for the temporary synagogue situated at No.1 Barrack Road in Aldershot and the Chaplain's room within the building to be maintained and held

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<sup>32</sup> VC/1/147. The Duke of Cambridge was the Commander-in-Chief of the Army. In 1862 together with the Secretary of State for War, Sir George Lewis, he had agreed under pressure from Wesleyans to add a fourth military classification of "Other Protestants" to those of Episcopalians, Roman Catholics and Presbyterians. Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, p. 120.

<sup>33</sup> VC/1/149, 154, 162, 166, 174.



available for service whenever required by the Visitation Committee or the Officiating Chaplain for the time being, for services to be held on festivals and for ground to be made available for the burial of any soldiers dying within a radius of ten miles of Aldershot. The Committee agreed to make an annual subsidy to the Aldershot congregation.<sup>34</sup>

It was in character that Cohen was also among the first people to moot the idea of the organisation which became the Jewish Lads' Brigade. In April 1891 he wrote a letter to the *Jewish Chronicle* entitled *But what about the Boys?* calling for the creation of a Jewish youth group modelled on the Boys' Brigade "to utilise drill and a quasi-military organisation". "Call these boys *boys*, which they are, and ask them to sit up in a Sunday School, and no power on earth will make them do it; but put a fivepenny cap on them and call them *soldiers*, which they are not, and you can order them about till midnight. The genius who discovered this astounding and inexplicable psychological fact ought to rank with Sir Isaac Newton."<sup>35</sup> Cohen continued his advocacy of a quasi-military organisation for Jewish boys,<sup>36</sup> until in 1895 the Jewish Lads' Brigade was founded. Modelled on the Boys' Brigade, its goal was famously expressed as being to "iron out the ghetto bend" in narrow-chested Jewish boys from the slums in order to transform them into straight-backed Englishmen. Cohen became the Brigade Staff Chaplain. During the years of the Anglo-Boer War the Jewish Lads' Brigade came to assume a more military aspect. Many of those who had passed through it were to serve as officers in the First World War.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> VC/1/166.

<sup>35</sup> JC, 3/4/1891, p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> e.g. JC 27/5/1892, p. 12; 10/6/1892, p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> Kadish, *A Good Jew and a Good Englishman*, pp. 2, 11-12, 21, 96ff, 107. Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, pp. 79-80, 282-283 nn. 131-132. AJHS, 1995, Apple, *The Jewish military chaplaincy in Australia*, pp. 672-673. JC 22/2/1895, p.14.

## 7.6. The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902

The Anglo-Boer War unleashed an outpouring of chauvinism, in which British Jews were caught up. Jews had a special reason to answer the call to the able-bodied young men of Britain to volunteer to serve queen and country. This was to combat accusations, widely shared in British pro-Boer circles in Britain and South Africa, that a shadowy conspiracy of Jewish financiers and mining capitalists had dragged Britain into conflict to advance their commercial interests by overthrowing the Boer Republics and replacing them with a sympathetic British administration. One may observe that for Jews to embrace the campaign might appear to vindicate rather than to repudiate that asserted objective, but such was the expression of commitment to crown and empire. At a time when barely two hundred Jews were serving in the army and the militia, many Jews volunteered to fight in South Africa. Estimates of the numbers of Jewish volunteers varied between something over one thousand and up to four thousand. One hundred and fourteen Jewish soldiers lost their lives. These numbers were seen as a huge contribution and sacrifice by the Jewish community.<sup>38</sup> Leading ministers spoke in vocal support of the war, and the Anglo-Jewish press covered it exhaustively. Jews fought on both sides in the war, although far more for the British than for the Boers, giving rise to the issue of their

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<sup>38</sup> VC/1A/284. JHS, vol. 5 (1902) pp. xiii, 57ff. Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp.201, 390 n.211. Kadish, *A Good Jew and a Good Englishman*, p. 59. Mendelsohn and Shain, *The Jews in South Africa*, p. 56. Rabinowitz re Cohen. Donaldson, *Remembering the South African War*, pp. 122-3, 126-9. JC 24/3/1905, pp. 10-11. Elsewhere the figures are put at one hundred and twenty-seven, with forty-two being mentioned in despatches: Roth, *Jews in the Defence of Britain – Thirteenth to Nineteenth Centuries* in JHS, vol. 15, 1939-1945, pp. 1-29 at 26.

differing national allegiances which had already arisen in wars in Europe and was to become familiar in the First World War.<sup>39</sup>

In 1900 the Board of Deputies applied to the Admiralty to permit Jews to observe Sabbaths and Holy Days, and orders were given that as far as possible they should be given facilities for the practice of their religion.<sup>40</sup> A Haggadah with a shortened form in English of the Passover Seder service was produced for Jewish soldiers serving in the Boer War. Thanksgiving services on the cessation of hostilities and for peace were held in synagogues on Wednesday 11 June 1902, which was the first day of the festival of Shavuot.<sup>41</sup>

Rabbi Dr. Joseph Hertz, later to become the British Chief Rabbi and then ministering in Johannesburg, visited the front and conducted services.<sup>42</sup> Rev. Lewis Phillips, who was born on 17 September 1881 in Portsmouth, went to South Africa, serving for seventeen years as a minister in Port Elizabeth and then in Pretoria. He may have served as a chaplain during the Anglo-Boer War in the Roberts Heights area. He returned to Britain, where he may have served as chaplain to the garrison in Aldershot. He passed away on 9 May 1977.<sup>43</sup>

In the history of non-Jewish military chaplaincy the Anglo-Boer War saw the engagement of commissioned chaplains and acting chaplains reaching new heights. Some eighty-five Christian chaplains (Church of England, Church of Scotland,

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<sup>39</sup> VC/1A/284. Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, pp.77-79, 282-283 nn. 122-130; 86-87, 284 nn. 8-9; 128, 290 nn. 22-24. Scottish Jewish Archives Centre.

<sup>40</sup> Pollins, *Economic History of the Jews*, pp. 142, 279 n.2. Emanuel, *A Century and a Half of Jewish History*, p. 150.

<sup>41</sup> Items 32 - 37 of part 1 of a catalogue of Jewish Militaria of January 2016 by Fishburn Books.

<sup>42</sup> I discuss this in section 9.7.

<sup>43</sup> JC 13/5/1977, p.24 (obituary). *Menorah* magazine, issue 22/2, September 1973, pp. 26-32; issue 26/2, Autumn 1977, p. 46.

Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Wesleyan) served, and local clergy were engaged. The Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Conditions of the Wounded in Armies in the Field of August 1864 had confirmed in Articles 1 to 3 the status of chaplains as non-combatants and had counted them as ambulance personnel. However the brutal realities of colonial campaigns sometimes called that status into question, on occasion by the actions of chaplains themselves, although this occurred less in the Anglo-Boer War.<sup>44</sup>

The concept of Jewish Chaplains serving in the field (unless Rev. Lewis Phillips actually served in the Anglo-Boer War) was not to reach its time until the First World War. During the years of the Anglo-Boer War Cohen assumed what Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz later termed an indefatigable chaplaincy responsibility for Jewish soldiers, compiling nominal rolls of them and keeping in contact by correspondence with them and with their relatives at home.<sup>45</sup> This was the beginning of chaplaincy by correspondence, which was to become a significant aspect of Jewish chaplaincy in wartime.

### 7.7. 1900 -1906

Through the early 1900s the Visitation Committee continued to monitor chaplaincy. It arranged for Rev. Cohen to make weekly visits to the training ship *Exmouth* moored off Grays in Essex to instruct three Jewish trainees in Hebrew and religion and for Rev. Dr. M. Berlin of Plymouth to do so for two Jewish trainees on the training ship *Impregnable* moored at Devonport. Revs Cohen and Adler made numerous visits to Aldershot Camp and to various hospitals and infirmaries including the Aldershot Military Hospital and the Royal Marine Infirmery at Deal. A succession of senior

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<sup>44</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp.164-165; 168; 385 n. 447.

<sup>45</sup> Rabinowitz re Cohen.

students from Jews' College including Reuben Tribich were accommodated by the Jewish community at Aldershot over the Sabbath and conducted services, although the numbers of soldiers attending services were small. The Chaplain's Room in the temporary synagogue was intended to promote a wholesome feeling of brotherhood among the Jewish soldiers at Aldershot, with a "friendly gathering" every Saturday evening with refreshments and the Jewish newspapers. Cohen visited Aldershot on Sundays when his duties within his own community in Borough allowed.<sup>46</sup>

In 1900 the Visitation Committee and the Board of Deputies, itself pressurised by Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler for having decided to request leave for only for the first and not the second days of festivals nor for Sabbaths, approached the Navy for leave for Jewish sailors. Alderman Emanuel of Portsmouth reported to the Board that "he believed that there was a considerable number of Jews in the Navy, but in the majority of cases they did not disclose the fact that they were Jews". The Board's letter said that since 1884 Jews in the Army had enjoyed certain privileges to observe Sabbaths and festivals, which were accordingly requested. The Admiralty replied that, whilst desirous of affording so far as practicable religious facilities, the nature and conditions of service on board H.M. Ships would render this impracticable.<sup>47</sup>

In its report in 1901 the Visitation Committee noted that:

While on this point of Jewish lads leaving public institutions to don the King's uniform, it is specially gratifying to mention that two boys entered the Army

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<sup>46</sup> VC/1/185, 191-202. JC 29/3/1901, pp.20-22; 11/4/1902, pp. 22, 23.

<sup>47</sup> LMA, ACC/3121/B/04/NA/022. (A draft of the Board's letter dated 2 April 1900, other drafts and what seems to be the final version survive.) JC 23/3/1900, p. 19. Endelman *Radical Assimilation*, p. 104.

from the Netherton Reformatory during the year, one joining the 10<sup>th</sup> Battery Field Artillery as a Bombardier and the other enlisting as a private in the D Company of the Durham Light Infantry. In addition to the above instances, one of the boys from the Hayes Industrial School enlisted in the Royal Lancasters, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion King's Own, during the year, and the Visitation Committee have every reason to be proud of the result of their efforts to induce the poorer representatives of Jewish youth to enter the King's service.<sup>48</sup>

One may comment that this says everything about the attitudes and aspirations of the established part of the Jewish Community. During a period of unprecedented Jewish immigration about which it felt increasingly uncomfortable, it offered up "the poorer representatives of Jewish youth" as its tokens of loyalty, integration and good citizenship.<sup>49</sup>

An article by Cohen in the *Jewish Chronicle* of 22 April 1904 referred to above reviewed the subject of Jews in the Army since 1854, and is perhaps the first comprehensive survey of the subject. It listed the numbers of known or "avowed" Jews by military role and corps, in the Army from 1876-1883 and 1884-1885 and then in most years until 1903 and in the Militia from 1893 in most years until 1903. Excluding officers and reservists and various units for which no religious returns were maintained, numbers grew in the Army from one in the years between 1876 and 1883 with significant jumps in 1896 and 1903 to 41 officers and 185 men in

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<sup>48</sup> VC/1/198, 201 (page 12). Netherton North Eastern Reformatory was at Netherton near Morpeth, according to its letterhead at VC/1/79.

<sup>49</sup> The Royal Commission on Alien Immigration was announced in March 1902 and reported in 1903: *Report of Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index and Analysis to Minutes of Evidence* (Cd 1742, 1741-I and 1743, 1903, respectively). The report led to the Aliens Act 1905.

1903, and in the Militia from two in 1893 with significant jumps in 1899 and (to 127) in 1903 to 14 officers and 78 men in 1903. In the Territorial Force there were by 1899 some 200 Jews. The article explained that there were not yet enough Jews serving at any one station to necessitate the appointment of an Acting Chaplain to devote the whole of his time to them and to draw capitation pay accordingly.<sup>50</sup>

In the 1903/1904 edition of the *Jewish Year Book* Cohen was referred to as the Officiating Jewish Chaplain of the 1<sup>st</sup> Army Corps Command; so he may by then have received this official appointment. The 1904/1905 edition stated that he was now also the Officiating Jewish Chaplain of the Aldershot Command. At some point he was also appointed the Jewish Chaplain to the Volunteer Force, which was in 1909 to form the core of the new Territorial Force. Cohen provided annual statistics for the Jewish Year Book of Jewish officers and men serving in every branch of the forces in Britain and in the Dominions and Colonies. He wrote that “It is notorious that many of the Jews, as in the case of the other smaller religious bodies, prefer to ‘follow the big drum’, i.e. attend the general C. of E. parade, which is favoured by fully 70 per cent of the men serving”. He estimated the numbers of Jews serving, including in Colonial Forces, as 1,740 in 1903/1904 and 1,550 in 1904/1905.<sup>51</sup>

In 1904 Cohen accepted an appointment as Chief Minister of the Great Synagogue in Sydney, which was the leading community in Australia. The Visitation Committee sought a successor. In a four page handwritten letter of 18 November 1904 for his successor entitled “The Visitation of Jewish Soldiers” Cohen set out a detailed

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<sup>50</sup> I discuss this in section 7.4., n. 22. JC 22/4/1904, p. 10. VC/1A/220. Endelman *Radical Assimilation*, p.104.

<sup>51</sup> *Jewish Year Book* 5664, 22 September 1903 - 9 September 1904, pp. 244-250, and 5665, 10 September 1904 - 29 September 1905, pp. 264-270. Rabinowitz re Cohen.

prescription for a comprehensive structure for Jewish military chaplaincy in England, acquired through thirteen years' familiarity with the military structure.<sup>52</sup>

In the early part of 1905 three ministers, Revs A. A. Green, M. Adler and S.A. Adler, were approached with a view to assuming the military chaplaincy appointment, and all declined.<sup>53</sup> Green and M. Adler were ministers with communities and S. A. Adler may have been. Rev. M. Adler later wrote that his knowledge of military matters was painfully small and that he had heard of the countless difficulties and obstacles which Cohen had faced. In the autumn Rev. M. Adler was approached again. The overriding sense of duty which was yet to shape his life must have prevailed. Reluctant to allow the Chanukah services which Cohen had created to lapse, he accepted.<sup>54</sup> On 1 November 1905 the Visitation Committee resolved:

THAT the Officer Commanding the Home District be recommended to appoint the Rev. Michael Adler, B.A., Minister of the Central Synagogue, as Jewish Chaplain to H.M. Forces.<sup>55</sup>

The committee also approved the appointment of Mr J.K. Levin as Visiting Minister to Aldershot, the vice, Mr D. Manchewsky having resigned.<sup>56</sup> Levin conducted Sabbath and festival services there, and he and Revs. L. Mendelsohn and S. P. Van Raalte made visits to the "Exmouth" Training Ship and the Ventnor Hospital.<sup>57</sup>

At the meeting of the Visitation Committee on 20 March 1906 there was reported the "appointment of Rev. Michael Adler by the Authorities as Chaplain to the Jewish

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<sup>52</sup> VC/1A/219-224. JC 10/6/1904, p.31.

<sup>53</sup> VC/1A/228.

<sup>54</sup> I discuss this in section 7.9. JW 30/12/1910, p. 12.

<sup>55</sup> VC/IA/230.

<sup>56</sup> VC/IA/230.

<sup>57</sup> VC/IA/235-236.



Soldiers of His Majesty's Forces and to the Jewish Seamen and Marines of the Royal Navy".<sup>58</sup> The minute book does not record how Adler's naval appointment came about; presumably it was suggested by the military authorities.

As Cohen's authoritative letter written a year previously remains in the minute book, it seems unlikely that anybody thought to pass it to Adler to help him to familiarise himself with the complexity of the task which he was undertaking. Adler was to prove to be a formidable correspondent, and had he known would doubtless have written to the numerous military commands and Jewish communities recommended by Cohen and have told the Visitation Committee, whom he was to keep informed about his work, that he was doing so.

#### 7.8. Cohen in Australia

To enable him to sit on the Sydney Beth Din Cohen had to study in London for almost a year for a Rabbinical diploma. In March 1905 he took and passed the examination. No successor had been secured when, now as Rabbi Cohen, he set sail on the S.S. Salamis on 2 May 1905 with his wife and their two sons and a daughter for Australia. On 17 June they reached Sydney, where on 25 June he was inducted into office as Chief Minister of the Great Synagogue. He joined the Australian National Defence League and later helped to found the New South Wales Jewish War Memorial in Darlinghurst. On 25 January 1909 he was appointed Jewish Chaplain to the Australian Military Forces, Eastern Command, and held this position until his death in 1934. He was the second commissioned Australian Jewish chaplain, the first, in 1908, having been Rev. Jacob Danglow of Melbourne. In

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<sup>58</sup> VC/1A/235.

Sydney he replicated the annual Chanukah Military Service which he had initiated in London, until it lapsed at the start of the First World War.<sup>59</sup>

As a passionate British patriot Cohen strongly supported enlistment into the Australian militias. In the First World War he was the Vice-President of the Universal Service League and campaigned for conscription. He wanted to go overseas and volunteered to go as a chaplain to the Dardanelles, but his congregation would not release him and at fifty-two he would probably not have been accepted. Like other ministers he did pastoral work among the families of serving soldiers, especially bereaved families.<sup>60</sup> His two sons served overseas with the Australian Imperial Force. In 1929 he was promoted to the equivalent rank of colonel and awarded the Colonial Auxiliary Forces Officers' Decoration. He opposed Zionism.<sup>61</sup> He died on 26 April 1934 at the age of seventy-one, and his wife died the same year.<sup>62</sup>

Francis Lyon Cohen was, largely through his own self-motivated efforts, the seminal figure in British and indeed Empire Jewish Military Chaplaincy. "Altogether, as the first Jewish Chaplain to H.M. Forces, he established a precedent of high devotion to one's duty, which was worthily upheld by his successors, the Rev. Michael Adler, D.S.O., B.A., and the present incumbent, Rabbi Dayan M. Gollop, B.A., S.C.F. (J.)."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs*, pp.51-52.

<sup>60</sup> Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, p. 85.

<sup>61</sup> Born in the late nineteenth century, the political movement seeking the return of Jews to the Land of Israel was contentious amongst Jews until the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and for some even after it. It divided the chaplains of the First World War, as I discuss in section 9.32.

<sup>62</sup> AJHS, 1995, Apple, pp.683, 697-9. AJHS 1969, vol. 6, part 6, pp.344-355 at p.352, Rabbi Dr. A. Fabian, *The Jewish Chaplaincy in Australia* (henceforth "AJHS, 1969, Fabian").

<sup>63</sup> Rabinowitz re Cohen. Oztorah, Apple. Shisler. Apple, *The Jewish military chaplaincy in Australia*, p. 239.

### 7.9. Reverend Michael Adler (27 July 1868 – 30 September 1944)

Rev. Michael Adler, B.A., was to become the leading figure in British Jewish military chaplaincy, in the years from 1905 to 1914 and throughout and after the First World War. He was the first chaplain to be granted commissioned rank. His father Joseph was from Russia - where is not recorded - and his mother Elizabeth (née de Porter), from Holland. His father may have lived in Germany (the word adler meaning eagle in German), or the family may have adopted the name. The family was not the same family as Chief Rabbis Nathan and his son Hermann Adler. Born in London, Adler's birth certificate describes his father as a journeyman tailor, meaning that he had constantly to find work from others, and shows his mother to have been illiterate. The younger of two sons, the older of whom, Sidney, emigrated to South Africa, Michael Adler was educated at the Jews' Free School, Jews' College and London University and ordained in 1890 at the age of twenty-two. He served for thirteen years as the first minister of the newly established Hammersmith Synagogue in London, taught Hebrew at the Jews' Free School and published three Hebrew grammar text books. In 1900 Adler became a chaplain to the Jewish Lads' Brigade, succeeding Cohen in 1906 as its Staff Chaplain. On 31 May 1903 he took up what was to become his appointment of thirty-one years, until his retirement in 1934, as the minister at the Central Synagogue in London.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1972, vol. 2, col. 283. Anderson, *All the A's*. Kadish, *A Good Jew and a Good Englishman*, pp. 96, 183 n. 3. *The Times*, 2/10/1944 (obituary). JC 6/10/1944, p.6 (obituary). JHS, vol. 15, 1939-1945, pp.191-194 (Memorial Addresses in Honour of Past Presidents), *The Rev. Michael Adler, D.S.O, S.C.F, B.A. (1868-1944)* by Rev. Arthur Barnett, H.C.F, B.A. (who served as an army chaplain with Adler on the western front, where he succeeded him as Senior Jewish Chaplain, and was later the minister of the Western Synagogue in London: section 9.27.3.).

Cohen and Adler were the pioneers of Jewish military chaplaincy. Both were from a working class background with probably a hand to mouth existence.<sup>65</sup> Eastern European Jewish society was traditionally divided between an elite of scholars and Rabbis and of the wealthy merchants who supported them, and the poorer and less educated masses.<sup>66</sup> In Britain too it seems that ministers were generally from a middle class background, facilitating their education to higher levels. As far as I can ascertain, of the nineteen British Jewish chaplains of the First World War ten were born in Britain, most into middle class families; of the three Australian chaplains, one was born in Britain, one in Australia and one abroad. Soldiers were predominantly drawn from the lower classes, which may be why Cohen and Adler were drawn to serving them.

Over the period of only a few months since his decision to accept the appointment Adler must have made considerable efforts to familiarise himself with the involvement of Jews in the military. In March 1906 he reported to the Visitation Committee that the Stationery Department of the War Office intended supplying Jewish soldiers in the Army “(viz – in 116 different Sections)” with a Prayer Book and an Old Testament for each man.<sup>67</sup> In May 1906 the *Jewish Chronicle* published the proceedings of the conference of visitors of the Visitation Committee, including an address by Adler about Jews in the Navy and the Army. Reviewing Jewish military involvement and chaplaincy services at that time, he said:

It is a striking fact that the 200 odd men (including a number of recent recruits) in the Army are distributed among some 130 units, comprising all sections,

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<sup>65</sup> In relation to Cohen I discuss this in section 7.4.

<sup>66</sup> Stampfer, *Families, Rabbis and Education*, p. 30.

<sup>67</sup> VC/1A/236.

cavalry, artillery, engineers, infantry, the service and medical corps – thus rendering the work of keeping in touch with our military coreligionists somewhat more difficult than it would be if they were grouped in larger numbers in a few regiments. This scattered condition of our men naturally increases the task of organising the parades for divine service that are a part of a Chaplain's duties, in accordance with the King's Regulations, 130-1304.<sup>68</sup>

On 24 May 1906 the Council of the United Synagogue wrote to the Secretary of the War Office with a comprehensive list of Adler's duties and applied for a grant of remuneration for him. It stated that there were some two hundred Jewish individuals distributed among some 130 units of HM Forces, both at Home and in the Colonies. Mr Adler maintained a regular correspondence with regiments and men and with the Jewish authorities at the Colonial Stations upon all matters relating to the religious life of Jewish soldiers. He had written to some 130 commanding officers about the distribution of Jewish Prayer Books and Old Testaments to the men in accordance with paragraph 1319 of King's Regulations. He had visited and arranged the visitation of men at military hospitals, detention barracks, Aldershot and elsewhere. He supervised regular services at Aldershot. He had arranged three Special Services in London on 24 December 1905 (which was the Chanukah Service) and 10 and 18 April 1906 (which were Passover services, the first of which is referred to in the next paragraph), and intended to make these annual fixtures and to add to them whenever occasion should present itself. Upon retirement or discharge of men he actively cooperated with the National Association in endeavouring to find employment for them.<sup>69</sup> The War Office replied in a letter dated August 1906.

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<sup>68</sup> VC/1A/240. JC 25/5/1906, pp.10-13.

<sup>69</sup> VC/1A/244.

Declining a further grant of remuneration, they wrote that they were not undervaluing Rev. Adler's efforts to facilitate for which he was recognised by the Department as Officiating Minister to the Jewish troops, but there was no reason to depart from the tradition already laid down that no extra expense was thereby to fall on the public funds.<sup>70</sup>

A military service was held at the Central Synagogue on the first day of Passover of 1906 attended by two sailors and twenty-six soldiers representing sixteen regiments, and a dinner was provided for them.<sup>71</sup> Also in 1906 the Visitation Committee recorded a maximum of five attendees at Aldershot.<sup>72</sup> In 1907 Rev. (later Rabbi) I. Livingstone from Jews' College replaced Mr. J. K. Levin as the minister to the Aldershot congregation and chaplain to the army garrison.<sup>73</sup> With a civilian congregation by then of principally two families, named Phillips (Rev. Cohen's mother's family) and Lazareck, his duties were mainly as the garrison chaplain.<sup>74</sup>

#### 7.10. The Chanukah Military Service

Initiated by Cohen in 1893, the annual Chanukah Military Service gradually grew. With the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899, its size increased dramatically. In 1902 it was attended by the acting Commander-in-Chief of the British army, Lord Roberts. His presence, believed to be the first in an official capacity by a Commander-in-Chief at a military function of exclusively regular soldiers and volunteers in the auxiliary forces who were "members of the Judaic community", was understood to be intended to mark in some measure his satisfaction with the conduct of Jewish troops

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<sup>70</sup> VC/1A/244, 247- 248.

<sup>71</sup> VC/1A/244.

<sup>72</sup> VC/1A/236, p.11.

<sup>73</sup> VC/1A/253.

<sup>74</sup> Slowe, *The Foundation of Aldershot Synagogue*.

during the South African War.<sup>75</sup> Held in various London synagogues and conducted by Cohen and then by Adler, the Chanukah Military Service became, as line drawings in the *Jewish Chronicle* show, a well attended and colourful affair. By 1903 it was attracting several hundred servicemen and guests.<sup>76</sup> In 1905 it was widely acclaimed as “an annual feature of Jewish communal life in London”.<sup>77</sup>

Adler retained responsibility for the Chanukah Military Services, which took place in his Central Synagogue, liaising with the Visitation Committee, which sometimes made a financial contribution.<sup>78</sup> The service became an event at which the members of the Visitation Committee wished to be seen. It had always to be held on the Sunday within the eight day festival of Chanukah, which in 1910 fell on 25 December. When Adler arranged for it to be held on that day, the chairman of the Visitation Committee reported with a commendable sense of priorities that he “had authorised a letter to be written to him indicating the inconvenient day, Christmas Day, which would necessarily preclude the attendance of many members of the Visitation Committee”. The minutes of the ensuing meeting, on 15 May 1911, record that a letter had been received from Adler intimating that the military service held on 25 December was a success in every way, but do not record whether members of the Committee compromised their principles in order to attend.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, pp. 78, 283 n. 125. Oztora, Apple. AJHS, 1995, Apple, *The Jewish military chaplaincy in Australia*, pp. 678-9. Englander, *A Documentary History*, pp. 342-345, citing *The Spectator* of 3/1/1903. JC 2/1/1903, p. 12.

<sup>76</sup> Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, pp. 78, 283 n.125. JC 18/12/1903, p. 12. LMA, ACC/2712/13/45 (1904 programme).

<sup>77</sup> AJHS, 1995, Apple, *The Jewish military chaplaincy in Australia*, pp. 680, 738 n. 78. VC/1A/230, 244. JC 29/12/1905, pp. 9-11. Unidentified newspaper report in JM, box ORT/03/01/04, file 2014.77.

<sup>78</sup> VC/1A/235, 257-258, 265-266.

<sup>79</sup> VC/1A/273, 275A, chairman's report, para 3. JW 30/12/1910, pp. 10-13.

In an extended article in 1910 in the *Jewish World* entitled “Some Reminiscences”, Adler wrote of his own initial lack of military knowledge and his reluctance to assume the honorary military chaplaincy. Some serving Jews, he wrote, objected to a Chanukah service and some to attending a synagogue at all. “It is a well known and deplorable fact that for every Jew who acknowledges himself as such there are five or six who attempt to disguise their religion. Many such a crypto-Jew has been attracted to the [Chanukah] Service and afterwards asked me to arrange for his correct religious denomination to be entered in the books of the navy or army.” The authorities had always lent their support to the Chanukah service.<sup>80</sup>

Over the years the Chanukah service came to assume a status of its own. The Royal Navy, Royal Marines and numerous Army regiments were represented, as were the Militia, Army Cadets, Yeomanry, British Red Cross, St. John Ambulance and the Metropolitan Police. Veterans of past campaigns attended. The order of the day was “Dress as for Church Parade”, which meant helmet and side arms. Every unit was in “Full Dress”, filling the synagogue with varied coloured uniforms and all kinds of head-dress including bearskins, busbies, shakos<sup>81</sup> and helmets. The service was attended by the Chief Rabbi, senior representatives of the armed services, including the Chaplain General and senior members of the Army Chaplains’ Department, and the Honorary Officers of the United Synagogue. It was followed by refreshments and, over time, by a dinner.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> JW 30/12/1910, pp. 12-13.

<sup>81</sup> Cylindrical peaked military hat with an upright plume.

<sup>82</sup> VC/1A/278, 288, 291-292, 301. JC 26/12/1913, pp. 21-22. The United Synagogue, *100 Years Ago ...Remembering World War One* (henceforth “US 2014”), p.16.



### 7.11. 1907-1914

In 1908 there was issued a *Notice from Rev Michael Adler, B.A. to Jewish Sailors and Soldiers*. It encouraged them to send Adler details of Jewish sailors and soldiers, to correspond with Adler, to report to him if a sailor left English waters or a soldier left London or Aldershot, to apply on recruitment for an Old Testament and a Hebrew and English Prayer Book, to attend the Passover and Chanukah parades in London and to send photos of themselves in uniform. It informed them that they were entitled to rights of membership to the West Central Jewish Working Men's Club in Tottenham Court Road in London.<sup>83</sup>

In April 1908 the Territorial Force came into being. Consisting largely of the Volunteer Force which had been raised in 1859 in response to fears of a French invasion, its primary role was home defence. By 1913 it was to comprise nearly a quarter of a million men organised into fourteen regional infantry divisions and fourteen regional cavalry brigades.

The creation of the Territorial Force was accompanied by the inauguration of its own Chaplains' Department.<sup>84</sup> An Army Order of 14 January 1909 commenced:

Clergymen of all denominations may be appointed to this department as chaplains to the Territorial Force, being attached for duty to units.<sup>85</sup>

This was an innovation, as chaplains in the regular army were commissioned only from amongst Anglican, Catholic and Presbyterian clergy. There was also created a new Advisory Committee on Territorial Force Chaplains. Appointed by the War

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<sup>83</sup> VC/1A/257.

<sup>84</sup> The history of what was then the Army Chaplains' Department and became in 1919 the Royal Army Chaplains' Department is the subject of Snape, *Clergy under Fire*.

<sup>85</sup> Howson, *Muddling Through*, pp. 28-29.

Office, it consisted of representative clergymen, one from each denomination, to advise the Secretary of State on matters connected with the Territorial Chaplains' Department. The Jewish members of the Advisory Committee became Adler and Colonel D. de L. Cohen VD, and the denominational point of contact was the Chief Rabbi.

The reorganisation allowed newly represented groups including Jews to seek chaplaincy commissions for the first time. On 22 June 1909 Adler was accordingly commissioned as a Territorial "Fourth Class Chaplain (Jewish)".<sup>86</sup> In the Army List he appeared as one of a small number of "unattached" (meaning unattached to any unit) chaplains in the Territorial Force, although it was apparently understood that he would do duty with the London Regiment.<sup>87</sup> The first commissioned Jewish chaplain in Britain, Adler attended Windsor Castle on 19 June 1909 as the representative of their Jewish members when the King presented the Colours to the Territorial Forces.<sup>88</sup>

Each year Adler wrote letters to officers commanding ships and regiments – thirty-four in 1910 – to enable sailors and soldiers to obtain leave for Passover and arranged for them to go to their parents or to local Jewish communities, including in Dublin, Cork, Gibraltar and Aden. Many in London attended services at Adler's Central Synagogue. Having in 1906 declined Adler's request to do so, in 1910 the Visitation Committee made a request to the Army Council for leave for Jewish

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<sup>86</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, p. 102. There was and remains a military chaplaincy hierarchy. The Chaplain General held the relative rank of major-general; chaplains of the First Class that of colonel; of the Second Class, lieutenant-colonel; of the Third Class, major; and of the Fourth Class, captain.

<sup>87</sup> *The London Gazette*, July 13, 1909, p.5388. Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp. 181-182, 202, 390 n. 215, noting Army List, July 1915, 1796a. Howson, *Muddling Through*, pp. 19, 31-34, 207; *Ministry to Saturday Night Soldiers*, pp. 5, 15, 17-18, 20.

<sup>88</sup> VC/1A/262.

soldiers to observe the festivals during the year. The Army Council replied that provided that the exigencies of service permitted the necessary orders would be issued.<sup>89</sup>

Adler attended the annual Territorial Force camps and conducted services.<sup>90</sup> Rev. L. Mendelsohn made five visits to the two sailors serving on the *Exmouth* training ship in 1910 and nine in 1911, and was still visiting the ship in 1913.<sup>91</sup> In 1911 Adler was awarded the Coronation Medal by the King, and was appointed, as the only Jewish member, to two committees at the War Office, one dealing with affairs relating to the regulars, and one with territorials.<sup>92</sup> The role of one of the committees was “to advise the Army Council in all matters affecting the spiritual and moral welfare of the Army”. Adler continued to serve on the Territorial Chaplains’ Advisory Committee.<sup>93</sup> Continuing the arrangements initiated by Cohen,<sup>94</sup> a succession of students from Jews’ College including Mr (later Rev.) M. Braun, B.A. and Mr. (later Rev.) A. Plaskow continued to visit Aldershot regularly to conduct services, which were generally attended by not more than six men. Adler continued to visit from time to time.<sup>95</sup>

In 1911 after prolonged negotiations the War Office granted the use of a hut situated at Hospital Hill within the lines of the Army Barracks at Aldershot, to be converted into a synagogue to serve both soldiers and civilians. The cost of repairs was

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<sup>89</sup> VC/1A/273, 275B-C, 277.

<sup>90</sup> VC/1A/273, 278, 301-302.

<sup>91</sup> VC/1A/276, 278, 302. Interestingly the *Exmouth* was still in use as a training ship in January 1939, when it had three young Jewish boys: JC 27/1/1939, p. 37.

<sup>92</sup> VC/1A/278.

<sup>93</sup> Howson, *Muddling Through*, p. 46. JC 6/10/1944 (obituary), reproduced in Anderson, *All the A's*, p. 7.

<sup>94</sup> Section 7.4.

<sup>95</sup> VC/1A/264, 276, 278, 302. *Menorah* magazine, issue 22/2, September 1973, pp. 26-32. JM, box 126.

defrayed from army funds, and other expenses were met by the Visitation Committee and by benefactors. The cost of annual maintenance was shared between the Visitation Committee and the few Jewish families living in Aldershot, who provided a visiting reader and teacher with board and lodging in return for the use of the synagogue and his teaching their children.<sup>96</sup>

In 1912 the War Office offered another hut situated near Solano Range within the lines of the Army Barracks at Aldershot and made a contribution to its conversion into a synagogue to replace the existing one. Adler and the Visitation Committee raised funds for the internal fittings and the Aldershot community provided furnishings.<sup>97</sup> A Consecration Ceremony took place on Sunday 24 March 1912. The opening ceremony was performed by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Matthew Nathan GCMG. Adler officiated. He thanked the Aldershot headquarters staff for the generous manner in which this commodious building had been placed at their disposal in place of the small room in which for many years past the Aldershot community had been housed. He acknowledged the generosity of a benefactor for the memorial board, which was a replica of that at the Central Synagogue, with the names of "114 officers, non-commissioned officers and men of our faith belonging to every branch of the Imperial Forces who gave their lives in the service of the Empire during the South African Campaign." He spoke of patriotism, righteousness and virtues. "Recognising all this, what wonder is it that we are prepared, both in days of peace and of war, to contribute our full quota towards the fighting forces of His Majesty the King." As a speech delivered in March 1912, this has a prophetic ring.

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<sup>96</sup> Slowe, *The Foundation of Aldershot Synagogue*. VC/1A/278.

<sup>97</sup> VC/1A/279-280. JM, box 126 and file 2011.74.

Full reports of the service including the text of Adler's address appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle*, the *Jewish World* and an Aldershot newspaper.<sup>98</sup>

Services continued at Aldershot.<sup>99</sup> That on Yom Kippur of 1912 was attended by "a good number of civilians, two or three of whom had tramped about a dozen miles", and only one soldier, Private Samuel Marks, RAMC. During his ensuing six months at Aldershot, Marks attended the Saturday morning service almost every week, "being paraded at the guard room by the Sergeant-Major to see that I was a credit to the regiment". In 1915, recovering from injury suffered in France, Marks returned there between 11 March and 25 April to find that Saturday services were being conducted in the afternoons by Rev. Plaskow. He met Adler, in his chaplain's uniform with his badges of twinned triangles, who "gave us a short, straightforward talk, the text of which exhorted us to be of good courage and not to be afraid".<sup>100</sup> In March 1916 Saturday afternoon services were still being held there by Plaskow.<sup>101</sup>

In October 1912 the Visitation Committee acceded to a suggestion by Adler that application again be made to the Navy for furlough for Jewish sailors and marines on the High Festivals.<sup>102</sup> Arrangements were made for Rev. M. Fenton, the Minister of the Chatham Congregation, to visit the Military Detention and Naval Hospitals at Chatham, the Naval and Military Barracks at Rochester and the Training Ship *Acteron*.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> VC/1A/283-284, 290. JM, box 126, file 2009.210.1. JC 29/3/1912, pp. 9-10, 16.

<sup>99</sup> VC/1A/292.

<sup>100</sup> JC 7/5/1915, p. 20.

<sup>101</sup> JC 17/3/1916, p.20.

<sup>102</sup> VC/1A/289.

<sup>103</sup> VC/1A/292.

In January 1914 the War Office acceded to Adler's application that in conformity with King's Regulations a Jewish Bible and Prayer Book be supplied at the public expense to every soldier on joining unless he declined them, and might be retained by him on discharge.<sup>104</sup> By that time the War Office and the Admiralty were repeating their familiar respective responses to annual requests for furlough for Jewish soldiers and sailors during the Holy Days, the Army issuing appropriate orders subject to the exigencies of service and the Navy declining to do so but communicating the dates to captains of ships in home waters in case circumstances should permit Jews to be afforded facilities for observance.<sup>105</sup>

### 7.12. Conclusion

In 1914 Britain had one commissioned Jewish chaplain, in the Territorial Force. Adler had visited and organised services and festival leave for Jewish soldiers, attended peacetime Territorial camps and sat on War Office committees. In some ways his experience was more akin to that of an officiating clergyman.<sup>106</sup> There were visits by ministers to sailors on training ships and to men in hospital. Unlike its Christian counterpart, Jewish military chaplaincy remained in its infancy, without any experience of operating in the field. Such was the scale of the challenge which at the outbreak of war in August 1914 faced the leadership of the British Jewish community, and specifically Adler and the Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue.

Yet, although perhaps not then fully apparent, something of real significance had been achieved. Exemplifying the thesis of Endelman and Feldman of the gradual

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<sup>104</sup> VC/1A/304.

<sup>105</sup> VC/1A/296, 305.

<sup>106</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp. 201-202.

and undramatic integration of Jews into the ways of British life, Jewish chaplaincy had been accepted as a concept and was already incorporated into the military establishment. Without this history, the leadership of the British Jewish community would undoubtedly have initiated a proposal for Jewish chaplaincy at the outbreak of the First World War. They were anxious, as were the Jewish communities of all of the western combatant nations, to seize this uniquely visible opportunity of loyalty and good citizenship of what they viewed as their adoptive countries. A fierce debate might then have ensued, as had happened over Wesleyan claims to chaplaincy recognition in 1862.<sup>107</sup> A proposal for Jewish chaplaincy would have been more far reaching, raising the question whether an axiomatically Christian military chaplaincy could accommodate this degree of diversity, politically, militarily, perhaps even theologically. Similar questions had arisen during the long nineteenth century struggle for Parliamentary emancipation for Jews.<sup>108</sup> In 1914 the Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener, a staunch High Anglican, forcefully opposed in cabinet the recognition of Nonconformist Christian denominations in the army, although under pressure he relented.<sup>109</sup> With a degree of prejudice against Jews within the British establishment, he might not have been so circumvented over Jewish chaplaincy. In

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<sup>107</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, p. 173.

<sup>108</sup> Salbstein, *The Emancipation of the Jews in Britain*, generally.

<sup>109</sup> As commissions began to be granted to ministers from various Nonconformist denominations, the War Office sought to avoid having to deal with a plethora of smaller denominations by seeking to create a generic category of Free Church Chaplain. Opposition from Wesleyans defeated this proposal. In cabinet the Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener vigorously opposed the recognition of Nonconformist denominations in the Army List, perhaps simply through lack of knowledge about them, although under pressure from cabinet colleagues he relented. The solution was the creation of a United Navy and Army Board which met from November 1914 and whose main purpose, for the War Office, was to recommend ministers for temporary commissions in the AChD. Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp. 187, 199. Snape and Madigan, *The Clergy in Khaki*, per Dr. J. H. Thompson, p. 22. Howson, *Muddling Through*, pp. 44-45.

Germany Jewish chaplains were to continue to stand, at least officially, outside the military establishment throughout the First World War.<sup>110</sup> As it was, a Jewish chaplaincy integrated into the military structure in the unobjectionable person of a single scholarly, cultured and Anglicised minister was in Britain a foregone conclusion which under the pressures of preparing for war exercised nobody.

This was all but entirely due to the initiative of Francis Cohen and to the Jewish military contribution in the Anglo-Boer War. “Unofficial chaplaincy” had laid the ground, through the efforts of Colonel Albert Goldsmid and Private Woolf Cohen to achieve official recognition of Jewish status in the army. Providence placed Cohen’s parents in Aldershot, where in his youth he absorbed the military ethos. The initiative of chaplaincy in 1892 was his alone. Whilst a serving minister with his own community he sought and obtained permission to visit Aldershot to conduct services and arranged for others to do so. He conceived the Chanukah service, an event which, supported by the authorities, assumed an increasingly high profile, annually enhancing the visibility of Jewish military and naval service. During the Anglo-Boer War he initiated chaplaincy by correspondence. This was to become a hallmark of Jewish chaplaincy in the First World War, not only, as it was for all chaplains, following the death of a soldier but to remain in contact with a soldier and to assure his family that he was well.

Jews played their distinguished part in the Anglo-Boer War, publicly acknowledged by the attendance of the acting Commander-in-Chief at the Chanukah service in 1902. These services, held in Michael Adler’s Central Synagogue since at least 1901, exposed Adler to this ethos. Even so Adler declined military visitation the first

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<sup>110</sup> I discuss this in section 8.



time that it was offered to him before accepting it the second time. That any minister, least of all Adler, a man of scholastic inclination ministering to a well to do community in the fashionable West End of London, would in 1905 have conceived of his own initiative of the marginal calling of military chaplaincy without this induction is all but unimaginable. As he later wrote, "I was the least likely person to undertake such a task."<sup>111</sup>

Without the recognition of the ministerial record of Cohen and Adler and of the Jewish military role in the Anglo-Boer War, Adler, still a civilian, might not have been permitted to step into uniform and a chaplaincy commission when the Territorial Force was granted its own chaplains in 1909. The issue of a commissioned Jewish chaplain had never previously been officially addressed. Nor might Adler have been granted the privilege, prized within the British Army, of a cap badge, unique to him, in the form of a Magen David, as an indicator of the identity and acceptance of Jewish chaplaincy. As it was, the Chaplain General, Bishop Taylor Smith, readily approved of this<sup>112</sup>, and Jewish chaplaincy was subsumed into the structure and operations of the Army Chaplains' Department.

More than some and perhaps all of the combatant nations of the First World War, Jewish military chaplaincy developed in Britain through the initiative of the Jewish community, essentially through the successive efforts of two ministers, Cohen and Adler, and the support, practical and financial, of the Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue. At every stage the role of the authorities was supportive but reactive.

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<sup>111</sup> JW 30/12/1910, p. 12.

<sup>112</sup> Albeit in a personal capacity, as I discuss in section 9.5., n. 61.

In January 1915 Michael Adler embarked for France. His wife Sophie, by whom he had a son and two daughters, had died two years earlier, on 22 December 1912.<sup>113</sup> At the age of forty-six Adler might otherwise have felt constrained from pressing to serve in the field. In that event Jewish chaplaincy might have developed along a different path, perhaps akin to that in Germany. With home leaves Adler served on the western front until July 1918 when ill-health compelled him to return to England. A second Jewish chaplain received a temporary commission in February 1915. By November 1918 there were nineteen British Jewish army chaplains, two serving in Britain and the others overseas, three Australian Jewish army chaplains under effective British control and one Rabbi in Alexandria who was locally appointed.<sup>114</sup> At the end of the war the award of a DSO to Adler, who had been for most of the war the Senior Jewish Chaplain on the western front, represented recognition of the contribution of Jewish Chaplaincy.

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<sup>113</sup> VC/1A/295.

<sup>114</sup> Michael R. Goldberger, *An Englishman and a Jew Reverend V. G. Simmons, ACD* in *Medal News*, December 1993, pp. 12-14, which accords with my research in stating nineteen chaplains, seventeen serving overseas. Sugarman, *Fighting Back*, pp.149-150, listing twenty-two chaplains of the First World War, together with three from Canada and Australia. Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, p.202, stating sixteen chaplains, twelve serving overseas.

## 8. JEWISH CHAPLAINCY IN THE COMBATANT NATIONS

The inadequacy of Jewish chaplaincy experience in Britain was essentially true for all of the combatant nations of the First World War. Some had evolved their own embryonic form of Jewish military chaplaincy, and all faced the same challenge of adapting it to attempt to meet the demands of a conflict of unprecedented nature and scale.<sup>1</sup>

In Tsarist Russia conscription integrated Jews into the state. The Russian army had vast numbers of conscript Jewish soldiers, many from a traditional religious background, for whom it had to make some religious provision. It did not have Rabbis with the army as chaplains. However during some historical periods Rabbis were allowed, as Rabbis rather than as military chaplains, to attend to the religious needs of Jewish soldiers and sailors, and were sometimes paid expenses for doing so. There were soldiers' synagogues, which were sometimes substantial buildings, in a number of areas. Some were attended by large numbers of soldiers, and records were sometimes kept of attendances. The accommodation of religious observance varied widely in time and place, as between local commanders and as between the navy and the army. Soldiers were sometimes permitted to practise Judaism and to elect representatives to act as religious leaders. The navy was sometimes more accommodating, sometimes allowing sailors to observe the Sabbath and to elect their own representatives to conduct services and to visit patients in hospitals and sometimes paying them a salary supplement for doing so. Much depended on the

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<sup>1</sup> In this section the term "Rabbi" is used compendiously, whether the person described had received Rabbinic ordination entitling him to use the term "Rabbi" or, as generally in Britain, was a religious leader perhaps with a qualification different to Rabbinic ordination.

historical period, local circumstances and the attitude of commanders. Some local Jewish communities hosted Jewish soldiers and sailors on Sabbaths and festivals. In short there was no consistency of practice. Rabbi Israel Meir Kagan, known as the Chafetz Chaim, published in 1881 in Vilna *Mahaneh Israel* (Camp of Israel), a pocket-sized digest of the basic laws of Judaism intended for Jewish soldiers.<sup>2</sup>

The position may have changed during the First World War, if an article in March 1916 in the *Jewish World* is reliable. This stated that the Tsar had exempted Rabbis from military service, and that Rabbis who were already enrolled in the army would be drafted into non-fighting units.<sup>3</sup> The story is recorded of a Russian Rabbi who was present at the death of a German Jewish soldier and wrote to his father, who replied that it was a double grief for him to know that his son had died in the arms of an enemy.<sup>4</sup>

France may have had three salaried Jewish chaplains during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. In 1874 the French National Assembly approved the appointment of one Protestant or Jewish chaplain for any unit with over two hundred members of that denomination. Since no unit had that many Jewish soldiers, no Jewish chaplains were appointed. In 1905 France inaugurated a strict separation of Church and State, with the result that the French army had no official chaplains of any religion.

However, with the Dreyfus Affair still casting its long shadow over French Jewry, some French rabbis served informally in the First World War, their numbers rising

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<sup>2</sup> Litvak, *Conscription*, generally. Petrovsky-Stern, *Jews in the Russian Army*, pp. 66-73, 191-196, 245. Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, pp. 27-29, 62-64, 181-183. Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> JW 29/3/1916, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Ferrara degli Uberti, *Making Italian Jews*, p. 199.

from sixteen in 1914 to forty-six in 1918.<sup>5</sup> One, Rabbi M. Jules Ruff of Verdun, who had served since the outbreak of the war, was killed in 1917 at the age of fifty-five.<sup>6</sup> The story was recorded in literature and art of Rabbi Abraham Bloch of Lyon, who bore a Crucifix to the lips of a dying soldier and met his own end soon afterwards in the arms of a Catholic chaplain.<sup>7</sup>

In Italy the First World War saw the establishment in June 1915 of military Rabbis who like Catholic chaplains were authorised to look after troops. This was generally although not wholly approved by the Jewish community. There were at least three Jewish chaplains: Rabbis Alfonso Pacifici and Elia Samuele Artom, both of whom later went in the 1930s to Palestine, and Rabbi S. H. Margulies of Florence, who in 1915 composed a soldiers' prayer, *La Guerra*, in which violence was justified by the "sacred duty towards my fatherland, which fights for its honour, for its right, and for the liberation of its sons who suffer beneath the foreign yoke". Jewish chaplains often delivered their sermons in churches for want of a more appropriate location, and dealt with the issue of marking Jewish graves. Reports and correspondence of military Rabbis reveal a certain discomfort on the part of Jewish soldiers, who were sometimes indifferent to religion and often tried to conceal their personal religious loyalties.<sup>8</sup>

In Austria-Hungary volunteer Jewish chaplains, termed *Feldrabbiner*, functioned from the late 1830s. Several reserve chaplains were appointed during the wars of the 1870s without military rank or salary, one with the title of chief chaplain. From the

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<sup>5</sup> Becker, *War and Faith*, pp. 20, 37, 41-49. Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *Understanding the Great War*, pp. 118-119, 123-125.

<sup>6</sup> JC 14/9/1917, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Netter, *Un Grand Gabbin*. Ferrara degli Uberti, *Making Italian Jews*, p. 203.

<sup>8</sup> Ferrara degli Uberti, *Making Italian Jews*, pp. 199, 203-210.

1880s one of them continued peacetime pastoral work among Jewish soldiers. At the start of the First World War there were no Jewish army chaplains. In the course of the war Austria-Hungary integrated some seventy-five Rabbis, holding an official seal and military rank, into its military chaplaincy.<sup>9</sup>

Prussia had no Jewish chaplains during the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, but allowed four Rabbis and rabbinical students to work in the field during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. In 1870 one came at the initiative of the Mannheim Jewish community to organise services for the High Holy Days; but the soldiers were summoned to battle, so that far fewer were able to attend the services which did take place. Later in 1870 the Prussian War Ministry agreed to appoint either three or four Rabbis who volunteered to act as chaplains, although without rank or remuneration, and to provide them with free transportation, food and quarters in enemy territory. After the war they returned home and were not replaced. At the outbreak of the First World War there were no Jewish chaplains in the German army. The Prussian War Ministry still limited admission of Jewish chaplains to volunteers on the same basis as in 1870. Six chaplains were initially appointed in 1914. They wore a uniform similar to that of officers but held no rank. They were paid by the respective Jewish communities which they had served in peacetime, not by the state, from which they

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<sup>9</sup> Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, pp. 64-66. Appelbaum, *Habsburg Sons*, ch. 6. Different numbers of Rabbis are cited: Dr Dieter Hecht stated in a lecture on 7 July 2014 which I attended that Austro-Hungary entered the First World War with nine army Rabbis and finished it with one hundred and thirty-three - some four times the number of those in the German army - who held the rank of captain in the reserves, and that in 1917 Alexander Kisch wrote a history of Jewish military chaplaincy in Austria. In an article entitled *The Jewish Military Chaplaincy in The Galitzianer, The Quarterly Research Journal of Geshet Galicia*, vol. 25, no.3, September 2018, at pp. 7-13, Alex Feller wrote that by the end of the First World War there were eighteen *Feldrabbiner* in the Hungarian Army and twenty *Feldrabbiner* and fifty-seven assistant field Rabbis in the Austrian Army, totalling ninety-five.

received only a free train passage, a two-seater carriage with two horses and a coachman and, from August 1915, a monthly expense allowance. In an army order of 1916 their relationship to the army was described as contractual. Their numbers rose, and there were thirty-six *Feldrabbiner* and nineteen rabbinical assistants.<sup>10</sup> Of these Appelbaum has identified twenty-nine *Feldrabbiner*, together with four rabbinical assistants and Rabbis who served as soldiers, of whom one was killed, one was twice wounded and some became sick. Although they were not military personnel, eleven were decorated.<sup>11</sup>

The United States appointed some Jewish chaplains on term-limited commissions in the Union forces during the Civil War; none served in the Confederate forces. With the coming of the First World War an Act of Congress empowered the appointment of Jewish chaplains. Initially four were appointed, their numbers rising over time to twenty-five (per Slomowitz and Levinger) or twenty-six (per Hoenig), one in the navy and the others in the army.<sup>12</sup> Of these, twelve served in Europe and the remainder in the United States. They were commissioned as first lieutenants. None of them was Orthodox. Because they had to travel widely the American Jewish Welfare Board equipped each of them with a Ford automobile, making them the envy of their Christian colleagues. One, Harry S. Davidowitz, was severely wounded by shrapnel, and spent several months in hospital. Rabbi Leon Voorsanger, enlisted as a private

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<sup>10</sup> Hank, Simon and Hank, *Feldrabbiner*.

<sup>11</sup> Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *Understanding the Great War*, pp. 118-119, 123-125. Grady, *The German Jewish Soldiers of the First World War*, pp. 35-36. Grady, *A Deadly Legacy*, pp. 70-72, 86-87, 108-111, 185. Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, pp. 63-66. Appelbaum, *Loyalty Betrayed*, pp. 2-6, 15-23, 317-329.

<sup>12</sup> Slomovitz, *The Fighting Rabbis*, pp.43, 54-55. Levinger, *A Jewish Chaplain in France*, pp. 85-87. Hoenig, *The Orthodox Rabbi as a Military Chaplain in Tradition*, 1976, vol 16, no.2, pp. 35-60 at p. 38

soldier in an ambulance unit.<sup>13</sup> Four of the chaplains served again in the Second World War.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> JC 13/7/1917, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> This paragraph is based upon the sources relating to the United States in section 3.5.



## 9. THE FIRST WORLD WAR

### 9.1. Introduction

Re-admitted to Britain from 1656,<sup>1</sup> Jews arrived from many lands of central and eastern Europe. Many were poor, surviving as hawkers and pedlars. Upwardly mobile, they or their children gradually settled as shopkeepers and artisans into a variety of trades. There were some wealthy business and banking families, and an immigration of up to 10,000 people who came voluntarily in the mid nineteenth century from an established middle-class life in Germany to take advantage of the burgeoning business opportunities afforded by the British Empire. By the late nineteenth century a slow, peaceful and incremental struggle for civic rights for Jews, sometimes following each corresponding step of the similar struggle for the more numerous and more visible Roman Catholics, had removed legal barriers if not all residual prejudice.<sup>2</sup> By 1881 the British Jewish community, of perhaps some 50,000 people, mirrored the British class system, with a governing quasi-aristocratic “cousinhood” of inter-connected families who, internalising the concept of *noblesse oblige*, led the community, together with upper middle, middle, lower middle and working classes. Although never a single community, they may conveniently be considered to have been in 1881 the established and largely native-born Jewish community. Inevitably most of the ministers who became Jewish chaplains were drawn from this native-born community, and of those most from its middle classes.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 6.3. This section draws upon the sources in section 4.

<sup>2</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, pp. 102-108. Salbstein, *The Emancipation of the Jews in Britain*, pp. 40-42 and generally.

Although no more homogenous than the established community of the “west end” of London and other cities, the immigrants of the “east end” may be considered the “other” Jewish community. Endelman wrote:

Between 1881 and 1914, 120,000 to 150,000 East European Jews<sup>3</sup> settled permanently in Great Britain, effecting a radical transformation in the character of Anglo-Jewry. Their poverty, occupations and foreignness drew unwanted attention to them and native-born Jews alike, fueling the fires of xenophobia and antisemitism. By virtue of their numbers they swamped the established community and gave Anglo-Jewry, once again, a foreign-born lower-class cast, which disappeared only in the mid-twentieth century. Furthermore, their behaviour rubbed against the comfortable grain of native Jewish patterns, creating intercommunal friction. Their old world religious practices offended those accustomed to the polite but somnolent atmosphere of anglicized synagogues. They balked at recognizing the authority of the chief rabbi, his reverend ministers and the Board of Deputies, while, in politics, a vocal minority embraced radical causes - socialism, anarchism, Zionism - that were believed to threaten native Jewish interests. But, at the same time, they guaranteed the demographic survival of British Jewry into at least the twenty-first century. For without this infusion of new blood, the small, increasingly secularized native-born community, left to itself, would have dwindled into insignificance, as drift, defection and indifference took their toll.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism in England 1918-1939* at p. 136 also has a figure of some 150,000 East European Jews.

<sup>4</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p. 127.

The immigrant experience is described by Lloyd P. Gartner in *The Jewish Immigrant In England, 1870-1914*, and in literature by Israel Zangwill in *Children / Grandchildren / Dreamers of the Ghetto*.<sup>5</sup> In his conclusion, Gartner wrote:

The personal relations between native and immigrant Jews were distant, and feelings of mutual disdain were heard from both quarters. Yet there remained considerable fellow-feeling, enough to preserve the sense of being a single community in law and in fate. However, the native oligarchs remained determined that despite the numerical preponderance of foreign Jews, the official Jewish community would remain thoroughly English, and in this they were signally successful. On the other side, pious Jews were disturbed by this community's infirm orthodoxy; Hebraists and Zionists took offence at its indifference to their cause; immigrants on the left assailed its ruling class; all disliked its patently condescending air toward them. Notwithstanding frictions and occasional eruptions, the Jewish community maintained itself as one body and slowly made peace with the immigrant element whose children largely assumed control in the 1930's and 1940's.<sup>6</sup>

A largely native-born community in 1881 of some 50,000, an immigrant community from then until 1914 of some 120,000 -150,000 and a generation of the children of both of them produced by 1914 a Jewish population in Britain of some 250,000-300,000 people. Some 230,000 (around three quarters of them if the total Jewish population was 300,000) lived in London, Manchester and Leeds.<sup>7</sup> The native-born

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<sup>5</sup> Zangwill, *Children / Grandchildren / Dreamers of the Ghetto*.

<sup>6</sup> Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant In England*, p. 273.

<sup>7</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p. 130. Gilbert, *Jewish History Atlas*, p. 81.

community were well integrated into British life, and the children of the immigrants were growing up more integrated than their parents.

Adler stated Jewish population figures of 275,000 for Britain and 145,000 for the Dominions, totalling 420,000. Of these some 50,000, most of them listed in the *British Jewry Book of Honour*, served in the armed forces during the First World War. Some 2,500 were killed and 6,500 wounded.<sup>8</sup>

The outbreak of World War I was to usher in, as Endelman wrote, four decades of unparalleled horror in European history.<sup>9</sup> For the Jewish communities of the combatant nations it represented a dramatic opportunity to disprove allegations of disloyalty to their “host” countries by rallying to the national cause and colours. Jews were generally integrated into society in the countries of western Europe in which they lived, felt and expressed loyalty to those countries and in proportion to their numbers were often over-represented in their national armies. Yet antisemitism existed, public opinion often created an association with the enemy and the loyalty of Jews was questioned, the more so even after the war.<sup>10</sup>

For British Jewry the Endelman and Feldman thesis is of gradualism and integration into British life. The First World War strained but did not rupture the relationship of British Jewry with Britain. On the contrary, it afforded another, and under the pressures of wartime an unusually immediate, opportunity for Jewish integration into national life. At the start of the war the Chief Rabbi and the Haham of the Sephardi communities issued a special prayer in Hebrew and English for all of the synagogues

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<sup>8</sup> BJBH, p.4. Kitching, *Britains’s Jews in the First World War*, pp. 242, 263.

<sup>9</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p. 183.

<sup>10</sup> Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol. 3, *Civil Society*: Panikos Panayi, *Minorities*, pp. 216-241 at pp. 222, 229, 231, 239, 240; Adrian Gregory, *Beliefs and Religion*, pp. 418-444 at pp. 434-435.

of the Empire.<sup>11</sup> Having initially opposed any alliance with Russia, the *Jewish Chronicle* said after the invasion of Belgium that war with Germany was Britain's moral responsibility. In a full-page editorial at the outbreak of war it wrote that "Britain has taken her fate into her hands, and is face to face with destiny". The editorial concluded by repeating, in capital letters:

England has been all she could be to Jews, Jews will be all they can be to England.<sup>12</sup>

and hung a large banner with these words outside its offices.<sup>13</sup>

## 9.2. To the Colours

Under the heading *The Crisis and Jewish Loyalty* the *Jewish Chronicle* published a letter from Michael Adler as Chaplain to H.M. Forces inviting Jewish young men to enlist in any force they wished and concluding: "Now is our time to prove the genuine loyalty and patriotism of the English Jew, and may the community rise worthily to the height of the occasion!"<sup>14</sup> It carried a list provided by Adler of Jews serving with the Expeditionary Force.<sup>15</sup> Adler actively advocated the absorption of Jews into the multitude of British units rather than, as was soon suggested, the creation of a Jewish unit.<sup>16</sup>

The War Office authorised "special religious ministrations" for regiments containing enough Jewish soldiers in Britain. However the only channel for religious support for

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<sup>11</sup> JC 14/8/1914, p. 6; 9/10/1914, p.16.

<sup>12</sup> JC 7/8/1914, p. 5. Madigan and Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience: Madigan, Thou Hast Given Us Home and Freedom, Mother England: Anglo-Jewish Gratitude, Patriotism and Service During and After the First World War*, pp. 307-333.

<sup>13</sup> JW 19/8/1914, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> JC 14/8/1914, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> JC 14/8/1914, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> I discuss this in section 9.3.

Jewish soldiers in the field was through correspondence with Adler. Complaints soon appeared in the press that there were no Jewish chaplains at the front to offer spiritual comfort to the wounded or to conduct burial services.<sup>17</sup> The *Jewish Chronicle* recognised the profound religious significance of Rosh Hashanah for some of the Jewish soldiers in the field.<sup>18</sup>

Long before conscription was introduced in 1916, the leadership of the British Jewish community encouraged young Jewish men to enlist. They were motivated by genuine patriotism, born of the belief that Jews were better accepted and treated in England than elsewhere, and by a wish to show the Jewish community in a positive light. A full-page recruiting poster for men aged between 19 and 45 was published in the Jewish press, in English and Hebrew.<sup>19</sup> Adler also disseminated the message in the non-Jewish press. The *Jewish Chronicle* published his letter, which had been printed in *The Standard* on 6 September 1914, detailing at length Jewish participation in the Armed Forces and concluding:

I shall be very pleased to furnish any further information upon this subject, as it is most desirable that Englishmen should realise that their comrades of the Jewish faith are fully determined to do their duty to King and country.<sup>20</sup>

From the first days of enlistment, recruitment centres were requested to advise Adler of every Jewish enlistment. By November 1914 he reported a total of four thousand.<sup>21</sup> After visiting training camps in Newbury and Aldershot in 1914, he

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<sup>17</sup> Lloyd, *Jews under Fire*, p. 95, nn. 337-338. JC 4/9/14, p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> JC 18/9/1914, p. 9. Berkowitz, *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project*, p.16.

<sup>19</sup> JC 2/10/1914, p.13. JW 7/10/1914, p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> JC 11/9/1914 p. 13.

<sup>21</sup> Lloyd, *Jews under Fire*, p. 73, n. 240. JC 14/8/1914, p. 10; 6/11/1914, p.24.

reported that a considerable number of Jewish soldiers were concealing their religion.<sup>22</sup>

The British Army struggled to adapt to what emerged as the unprecedented nature of twentieth century warfare. Christian military chaplaincy had at least the benefit of long field experience, which Jewish military chaplaincy did not. By 1914 the concept of Jewish military chaplaincy to soldiers and sailors had been accepted and a single commissioned Jewish chaplain, Adler, was in post, in the Territorial Force and on War Office committees. Holding a Territorial commission, his role was still more akin to that of an officiating clergyman. With the record of chaplaincy service through the Anglo-Boer War and subsequently, including his own Territorial service, Adler was able to fight to initiate and create Jewish chaplaincy in the field, for which the First World War proved to be the test bed.<sup>23</sup> Snape considers that, against a backdrop of religious decline, especially in formal religious practice, British Jewry, in common with the British churches, made gigantic, even heroic, efforts in the First World War to provide for the spiritual, moral, mental, physical and medical needs of the British soldier.<sup>24</sup> The provision of chaplains was one element of these efforts.

The First World War began with roughly one hundred and twenty British chaplains and ended four years later with nearly three thousand five hundred. It is believed that one hundred and two chaplains (fortuitously not including any of the Jewish chaplains) died through enemy action. British Chaplains were volunteers, appointed on contracts for generally one or sometimes two years, and were then free to renew them or to leave the army. Under Articles 1-3 of the Geneva Convention for the

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<sup>22</sup> Lloyd, *Jews under Fire*, p. 73, n. 242. JC 6/11/1914, p. 26.

<sup>23</sup> I discuss this in sections 9.3. and 9.5.

<sup>24</sup> Snape, *God and the British Soldier*, pp.239, 241-242.

Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field of August 1864 chaplains were classified as non-combatants and as ambulance personnel, and if captured were eligible for repatriation.<sup>25</sup> With insufficient chaplains at the start of the war they were generally attached to field ambulances at brigade level and so were less visible at battalion level. It therefore came to be believed that chaplains had been barred from the front line. No order to this effect has been identified, and there was not in fact any such policy. Chaplains served at Gallipoli and in the retreat from Mons. As the first Jewish chaplain Adler arrived in January 1915 to find instructions awaiting him not to venture beyond the lines of communication on the chance of meeting Jewish soldiers. This instruction seems to have been specific to him, perhaps as his role as a Jewish chaplain was experimental.<sup>26</sup> In December 1915 Sir John French was succeeded as Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force by Sir Douglas Haig, who greatly valued chaplains. By that time more chaplains were available, some serving partially in the front line.<sup>27</sup>

Writing after the war, Rev. Arthur Barnett, who in 1918 succeeded Adler as Senior Jewish Chaplain on the Western front, described Jewish chaplaincy in the First World War as a *creatio ex nihilo*. He attributed this creation to Adler, and was indubitably right to do so. But it is also attributable in varying degrees to the other Jewish chaplains. By the end of the war there were nineteen Jewish chaplains in the British Army. They were commissioned as officers in the Army Chaplains' Department, initially, as all chaplains were and still are, in the relative rank of

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<sup>25</sup> Section 7.6.

<sup>26</sup> I discuss this in section 9.5.

<sup>27</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp. 168, 217-220, 225-226, 238, 255, 259-260, 316, 385 n. 447. Howson, *Muddling Through*, pp. 70-71, 80-81, 123-141, 167. Madigan, *Faith Under Fire*, p. 120.



captain. A twentieth chaplain, a civilian Rabbi in Egypt, acted as honorary chaplain to the Zion Mule Corps. With scant guidance these chaplains had largely to chart their own course.

Adler was the first and the senior Jewish chaplain on the western front, where he served for the greater part of the war. He maintained a diary throughout, and left a much fuller account of his experiences than any of the other chaplains. He essentially personifies the development of British Jewish chaplaincy in the First World War, which I therefore consider through his experiences. Serving between them on the Western, Italian and Salerno Fronts, in Egypt and the Canal Zone and with the Jewish Legion in Egypt and Palestine, the other chaplains exemplify that development. Australian Jewish chaplaincy, with two successive chaplains and a YMCA appointee who effectively served as a chaplain, was initially for all practical purposes subordinated to British Jewish chaplaincy, and I therefore consider it.

There were always large numbers of troops in Britain, and chaplaincy services were provided to Jewish troops by chaplains of the Home Command and by a network throughout the country of civilian officiating clergymen. The established British Jewish community sought to oversee Jewish chaplaincy, initially through the Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue and increasingly through the Jewish War Services Committee.

The pattern of Jewish chaplaincy appointments was slow. 1915 saw the appointment of Revs. Adler and Simmons in France, Rev. Lipson to the Home Command and Rabbi Della Pergola and Rev. Grajewsky in Egypt. 1916 brought two further appointments, Revs. Barnett and Morris, in France. 1917 saw seven appointments (one in Egypt) and 1918 six, the last two as late as October and November. Rev.

Falk served with the Jewish Legion in Palestine from January 1918 until January 1921. The Jewish Legion was an all but entirely Jewish unit, so chaplaincy within it differed from Jewish chaplaincy to soldiers scattered throughout innumerable units of the British and other armies.<sup>28</sup>

Jewish chaplains were based at and alternated between field hospitals, casualty clearing stations, army bases, army field headquarters and sometimes accommodation in French towns. Whilst each Jewish chaplain's experiences were his own, a clear and similar pattern runs through their activity. They performed the duties of all chaplains, including visiting wounded and sick soldiers in hospital and conducting funerals.<sup>29</sup> Their specifically Jewish roles included locating Jewish soldiers and keeping lists of them, maintaining contact by visits and correspondence with them and their families and arranging for their graves to be designated as Jewish. They liaised with the military authorities to authorise and publish in orders the holding of services on Sabbaths and festivals, arranged and conducted services, often at short notice and in improvised locations, with services having sometimes to be cancelled at short notice for military exigency, and generally provided such support as they could for Jewish soldiers. Jewish chaplains were often invited to meetings of chaplains and Revs. Adler, Levy and Geffen delivered addresses to their fellow chaplains on aspects of Jewish life.<sup>30</sup>

### 9.3. A Jewish Battalion?

Very early in the war, and influenced by official encouragement of local recruitment and "Pals' Battalions", the suggestion emerged within the Jewish community of the

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<sup>28</sup> I discuss this in section 9.29.

<sup>29</sup> I discuss the general and the specifically Jewish duties of chaplains in section 6.7.

<sup>30</sup> BJBH, p.45. US 2014, pp. 12-19. *The Times History of the War (1914-1921)*, vol. VIII, pp. 350-352.

creation of a Jewish unit. This would enable Jews to serve with their co-religionists, facilitate religious observance of the Sabbath and festivals and the provision of kosher food and within the dislocation of army life provide a supportive Jewish environment. Many leading figures within the community opposed the proposal, both through both the suggestion of some form of preferential treatment for Jews and the fear of its leading to Jews being insufficiently integrated and becoming marginalised in the war effort. These included Adler, although not on religious or chaplaincy grounds. On 28 October 1914 he wrote to the War Office:

I therefore desire to make it perfectly clear to the authorities of the War Office that this movement is totally irresponsible, and has received no countenance whatever from any influential member of the Jewish community. The matter has been very carefully considered both by the military and civilian representatives of our community, and they are practically unanimous in deciding that no such Battalion is desirable or necessary.

Within the Jewish community the issue became explosive, with prominent advertisements in the Jewish press and public meetings. The *Jewish Chronicle* and the *Jewish World* criticised Adler for his opposition to the proposed Jewish Battalion as transcending the role of the chaplain.<sup>31</sup> A Jewish chaplain might have been expected to prioritise the availability of religious facilities and a Jewish ethos within a Jewish unit, as some Jewish chaplains later did when the issue resurfaced in 1917, with a different outcome, in relation to the Jewish Legion, which again Adler

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<sup>31</sup> JC 6/11/1914, pp. 5, 24, 25; 13/11/1914, pp. 10 - 11; 27/11/1914, pp. 12 - 13; 4/12/1914, p.6; 11/12/1914, p. 20; 1/1/1915, p.13; 8/1/1915, p. 21. JW 14/10/1914, pp.7-8; 28/10/1914, p. 23; 4/11/1914, pp. 9, 28-29; 11/11/1914, pp.5-6, 16; 2/12/1914, pp.5-6, 21; 9/12/1914, pp. 7, 15; 16/12/1914, p. 25; 23/12/1914, p.11; 30/12/1914, p. 1; 6/1/1915, p. 13; 27/1/1915, p.12; 17/3/1915, p. 10.

vigorously opposed.<sup>32</sup> Adler's position represented that of much of the British Jewish establishment, which feared the perception of an "alien battalion" or a "ghetto regiment", craved recognition of its own genuine patriotism and wished to assert that of the British Jewish community, uncomfortably transformed from its integrated and anglicised character by thirty years of numerically overwhelming immigration since 1882 from Eastern Europe.<sup>33</sup>

The issue of a Jewish unit had ramifications much wider than chaplaincy. Adler was the only Jewish minister in any way associated with the army, so that since appointing him to its two committees in 1911 the War Office would have come to regard him as the Jewish view and authority on military matters. In opposing the creation of a Jewish unit he was supported by the War Office liaison officer with the Jewish community, Edward Sebag Montefiore, and the chief recruiting agent of London Jewry, Denzil Myers.<sup>34</sup> At this brief pivotal moment in the early months of the war, Adler and Sebag Montefiore were probably alone regarded as the main conduit between the Jewish community and a War Office overwhelmed with the unprecedented demands of the war. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, in going so far as to approach the War Office to reject the proposal, Adler, as the single Jewish chaplain, exaggerated his case and utilised the privileged access of his position to take too much upon himself. Had he supported the creation of a Jewish unit, his influence and the demands of recruitment, then voluntary, might have led to one being formed. One can only speculate how this might have affected the role of Jews in the military and the development of Jewish chaplaincy.

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<sup>32</sup> I discuss this in section 9.29.

<sup>33</sup> Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry*, p. 118.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid*, p. 118.

#### 9.4. The Early Months of the War

After the war Adler wrote *Experiences of a Jewish Chaplain on the Western front (1915 – 1918)*, which was published in the *Jewish Guardian*, in the *Lewes Press* in 1920 and in the *British Jewry Book of Honour*.<sup>35</sup> For the first time in Anglo-Jewish history, he wrote, Jewish chaplains formed part of the British Army on active service. The demand for them to be at the front with their men became apparent in the early days of the war in order to minister to “the large Jewish Community serving in the field”, as Field Marshal Lord French described them in a dispatch. The Chaplain General, the Right Rev. Bishop Taylor Smith, who had previously shown his interest in Adler’s work by attending one of the Chanukah military services and in other ways, readily approved of Adler’s proposal that the Magen David should be adopted as the Jewish Chaplaincy badge in place of the customary Chaplains’ badge of a Cross.<sup>36</sup>

The British Army had always comprised numerous regionally raised and specialist units. So uniform badges have long been important as an indicator of unit identity. Exactly when a separate badge for Jewish chaplains was first adopted is not clear. Taylor Smith was the Chaplain General from 1901 until 1925. Whilst he may have approved of the badge, it required War Office approval, which it seems may not actually have been given.<sup>37</sup> The issue may have arisen when Adler was commissioned into the Territorial Force in 1909, or early in the First World War. By January 1915 Adler was wearing the badge.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> BJBH, pp. 33 - 58. Madigan and Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience: Panter, Between Inclusion and Exclusion*, pp. 159-181.

<sup>36</sup> BJBH, pp.33-34. Illustration 2.

<sup>37</sup> It seems that early records of the Army Chaplains’ Department were lost in a fire at the Public Records Office during the Second World War.

<sup>38</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp.175, 265. I discuss this in section 9.5.

In August 1914 Adler created a pocket sized *Soldiers' Prayer Book*. It was issued in September 1914 and, as the *Prayer Book for Jewish Sailors and Soldiers*, enlarged by the Chief Rabbi in June and in December 1916 and again in April and in August 1917, including material suggested by Adler and by chaplains Solomon Lipson and Australian David Freedman. Including messages from the King and from Lord Kitchener, it was issued by H.M. Stationery Office with the Authority of the Chief Rabbi, and over one hundred thousand copies were eventually printed. The War Office agreed for it to be issued to every Jewish soldier in the Army, and similar arrangements were made for the Navy.<sup>39</sup> It came to serve as a model for the American Military Prayer Book, and was to be reissued in the Second World War.<sup>40</sup>

The Chief Rabbi also selected and arranged *A Book of Jewish Thoughts*. In issue by at least 1917 and pocket sized, it was enlarged and revised in 1918, and reissued in the Second World War. For Jewish servicemen there were also produced in pocket size *Jewish Versions of the Psalms and Prayers for Trench and Base* and the *Festival Machzor*.

In November 1914 Adler issued circulars to Jewish soldiers and sailors respectively:

To All Jewish Soldiers/ Sailors.

The Chaplain sends his warmest greetings to his friends at the Front/in the Royal Navy upholding the honour of England, and wishes them speedy success and all good luck. He would be happy to receive letters from them, telling him how they are, and will be glad to answer.

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<sup>39</sup> JW 28/10/1914, p. 17.

<sup>40</sup> BJBH, p.38.

The God of Israel keep you all and bring you safely home with victory!<sup>41</sup>

Identifying what was to become one of the dilemmas of Jewish chaplaincy throughout the war, the *Jewish World* criticised the last sentence of this message:

For one thing there are more Jews fighting in the German and Austrian armies than in the English, and they too expect 'the God of Israel' to keep them all and bring them safely home to victory. 'The God of Israel' is best left out where the Children of Israel cannot be at one.<sup>42</sup>

The issue of Jews fighting on both sides was an inevitable concern throughout the war, and soldiers may have raised it with chaplains, for whom it must have presented a challenge. Jews are historically and ethnically a people, globally dispersed for almost nineteen hundred years yet preserving a sense of peoplehood. In the First World War some Jews were conscious that they might be fighting fellow Jews<sup>43</sup>, and some had relatives living in enemy countries and perhaps fighting for them. There are apocryphal stories, impossible to verify, of Jews crying out amidst the intensity of combat and fellow Jews realising that they were Jews and sparing their lives. This issue had arisen during nineteenth century European wars; for obvious reasons it did not arise in the Second World War.

Also in November 1914 Adler issued a notice inviting men in the Navy and Army who had not received a copy of the Prayer Book to notify him.<sup>44</sup> During 1916 he was again to circulate letters to soldiers and sailors offering to send a Soldiers' or Sailors' Prayer Book to anybody who did not have one. The letter to soldiers informed them

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<sup>41</sup> JC 20/11/1914, p. 21. JW 18/11/1914, p. 23. VC/2/7.

<sup>42</sup>JW 18/11/1914, p. 15.

<sup>43</sup> I cite instances of this in sections 9.19. and 9.20.

<sup>44</sup> JC 20/11/1914, p. 20.

that Revs. V.G. Simmons and A. Barnett (who had been appointed in August 1915 and March 1916 respectively) were additional chaplains in France, and asked for the names and details of any other Jewish soldiers whom they knew. The letter to sailors regretted that Adler was unable to visit them.<sup>45</sup>

Adler visited wounded Jewish soldiers, including in King's College Hospital in London.<sup>46</sup> From the start of the war hospitals were instructed by the Chaplain General to forward to Adler the names of Jewish wounded.<sup>47</sup> At Millbank Hospital in London the wounded were grouped under different coloured codes according to their religion, green being for Jews.<sup>48</sup> In a pro forma letter Adler requested hospitals to notify him of the arrival of any Jewish soldiers; if a man should die to notify the Jewish Minister in the town or, if there was none, Adler; and to apply for a number of the new prayer books which the War Office had just authorised for the use of any Jewish patients. In a counterpart pro forma letter Adler requested Jewish ministers to find and visit Jewish patients in local hospitals and to keep him informed. In towns where there was no minister Adler was asking any local Jewish resident whom he knew to do this. He wrote that there were a considerable number of Jewish sailors and soldiers scattered throughout the different military hospitals in the country and he was very anxious to organise a system by which every one of them was visited by one of the Jewish ministers. Letters should also be written for them to their relatives. Adler issued in total 5,200 letters, initially (although reimbursed) at his own expense.<sup>49</sup> He conducted a large correspondence with Jewish soldiers at the front

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<sup>45</sup> JM, file 2011.74.

<sup>46</sup> JW 6/1/1915, p. 15.

<sup>47</sup> JC 11/9/1914, p. 10.

<sup>48</sup> JW 28/10/1914, p. 9.

<sup>49</sup> VC/2/7.



and in Britain, on which, even with secretarial and volunteer help, he had to spend more than half of each day. With the permission of the War Office he appointed nine officiating clergymen around the country.<sup>50</sup>

From early in the war regular Saturday morning services took place at Aldershot, which Adler visited monthly. Regular Sunday morning services, coinciding with church parade, were arranged at numerous venues including army camps and Rev. Lipson's Hammersmith Synagogue. Adler visited the Canadian Expeditionary Force on Salisbury Plain, where he conducted a service and addressed the troops.<sup>51</sup>

Adler wrote to the Chief Rabbi of France, Grand Rabbin Alfred Levy of Paris, to try to arrange for British Jewish soldiers to join French troops at religious services. The Chief Rabbi replied that nearly all of the members of the French rabbinate were serving, as chaplains or as soldiers, and that the Chief Rabbi of Lyons had been killed. The Chief Rabbi had given instructions for services to be held in the field if a minyan could be collected.<sup>52</sup> Adler also initiated correspondence with him about the distribution of the new Soldiers' Prayer Books by French Jewish Chaplains amongst both British and French Jewish soldiers. The Chief Rabbi responded warmly, saying that his chaplains "were delighted to receive your books, which are remarkable for their conciseness and practical arrangement" and asking for a quantity of the Prayer Books to be sent.<sup>53</sup>

Although Adler had initially decided that there should not be a Chanukah Military Service that year, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Chanukah Military Service did take place, at

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<sup>50</sup> JM, file 2011.74.

<sup>51</sup> JC 13/11/1914, pp. 14, 21; 20/11/1914, p. 15. JW 16/9/1914, p. 20; 4/11/1914, pp. 27-28; 18/11/1914, p. 22; 9/12/1914, p. 21; 5/5/1915, p.18.

<sup>52</sup> JC 2/10/1914, p. 11. JW 7/10/1914, p. 11; 21/10/1914, p. 14.

<sup>53</sup> JW 25/11/1914, pp. 19-20.

Hammersmith Synagogue, on Sunday, 13 December 1914, conducted by Adler and Lipson. It was announced that Adler was going to the front; he was wished success, and the gathering sang “for he’s a jolly good fellow”. Chanukah services took place at other locations including Colchester, Aldershot, Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester. Adler announced that “The Chaplain would feel grateful to officers and N.C.O’s at various centres if they would be good enough to institute such services in their districts, as the services are very much appreciated by the men concerned, and the new Prayer Books are now in the hands of all the men”. By the end of 1914 the Prayer Book was being widely distributed. A Service of Intercession took place in synagogues on the Sabbath of 2 January 1915, with a prayer composed by the Chief Rabbi.<sup>54</sup>

#### 9.5. Adler’s Visit to France

With his experience as a Territorial Chaplain, Adler suggested early in the war that he go to France. The War Office could find no precedent for a Jewish chaplain being attached to an army in the field, and declined. Through the good offices of a Jewish Member of Parliament, Sir Charles Henry, Bart.,<sup>55</sup> it was decided that Adler should be allowed to pay a visit to the troops in order to ascertain whether there was any scope for religious work among the Jewish soldiers scattered in all parts of the front.<sup>56</sup> Adler was again supported by the Chaplain General, Bishop Taylor Smith.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> JC 13/11/1914, pp. 14, 21; 20/11/1914, p. 15; 11/12/1914, p. 16; 18/12/1914, p. 23; 25/12/1914, p. 20. JW 4/11/1914, p. 22; 18/11/1914, p.22; 2/12/1914, p. 19; 9/12/1914, p. 21; 16/12/1914, pp. 19, 23; 23/12/1914, p. 18; 6/1/1915, p. 20.

<sup>55</sup> The death of whose son, Lieut. Cyril Henry, Adler noted in his diary on 1 May 1916.

<sup>56</sup> BJBH, p.33.

<sup>57</sup> Lloyd, *Jews under Fire*, p. 95.

The Council of his Central Synagogue granted him leave of absence, and the *Jewish World* applauded him.<sup>58</sup>

Adler set off on Monday 25 January 1915 on his exploratory visit to the front, accompanied by his orderly, Private R. Friedlander. He was seen off by numerous people on the platform at Waterloo Station. During his absence Lipson assumed his duties at home.<sup>59</sup> He landed at Havre, where the Principal Chaplain of the British Expeditionary Force, the Rev. Dr. J.M. Simms, met him at the dock and accompanied him to report to Base Headquarters at Havre.<sup>60</sup> Within an hour of his having landed a soldier noticed Adler's Magen David badge, saluted him and asked him if he was the Jewish chaplain. So from the outset, Adler wrote, the badge proved its value.<sup>61</sup>

Adler spent a week in Havre, visiting all of the camps and twice visiting each of the eight hospitals. He arranged services, on Friday 29 January in the YMCA Hut at

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<sup>58</sup> JM, file 2011.74. JC 18/12/1914, p. 23. JW 9/12/1914, p. 8; 20/1/1915, p. 12.

<sup>59</sup> JW 27/1/1915, p. 18.

<sup>60</sup> There were four main bases: Havre, Rouen, Etaples, Boulogne. Howson, *Muddling Through*, p. 100.

<sup>61</sup> BJBH, pp.33-34. Simms, an Irish Presbyterian, was the Principal Chaplain of the B.E.F. Madigan, *Faith Under Fire*, pp. 48-54, 112, n. 258. Snape and Madigan, *The Clergy in Khaki*, per David Coulter, pp. 83-84. Simms was therefore the administrative head of chaplaincy in the B.E.F., including Jewish chaplaincy, and Adler's chain of command ran through Simms to the War Office. In July 1915 the Church of England unilaterally created a separate chain of chaplaincy command, dividing the unified organisational structure within the AChD into a dual one. Taylor Smith, an evangelical Anglican, held the office of Chaplain General which despite its title conferred authority only over Anglican chaplains and not over Jewish or other chaplains. Howson, *Muddling Through*, pp. 20, 35, 37, 57, 85-93, 194. On Taylor Smith's death in 1938, Adler wrote to *The Times* that he had always been most welcoming of Adler and supportive of his work. "When the War Office attached me to the Expeditionary Force .... in bidding me farewell he bestowed upon me the Priestly Blessing, like a father on his son. All the Jewish Chaplains retain a warm affection for his memory as a man of exalted spiritual character, who knew no difference of creed, but inspired all under his command with enthusiasm for their work." Whitlow, *Taylor Smith*, pp. 100-101. Snape and Madigan, *The Clergy in Khaki*, per Dr Alan Robinson, p. 201.

Harfleur Reinforcement Camp and on Saturday 30 in the Synagogue in Havre, where, he wrote to Mr. Ornstien of the Visitation Committee, "I have found a Synagogue & a Rabbi (aged 999)".<sup>62</sup> Nominal rolls of Jews in the area had been obtained, notices were published in base orders, and invitations were sent to all officers and men in Havre, with, Adler wrote, successful results.<sup>63</sup>

Adler moved from 1 to 15 February to Rouen, where he conducted a number of services and visited No. 1 General Hospital and every local concentration of troops.<sup>64</sup> On 4 February he wrote from Rouen to the wife of a soldier called Lewis Nathan: "I saw your husband today in one of the local hospitals. He has been wounded, but is now making excellent progress, and I expect will soon be well again." At Le Touquet he arranged for the grave of Private Maurice W. Fuchsbalg of the Honourable Artillery Company, who had been buried the previous day, to be suitably marked. Sergeant Sol Harris of the Army Cyclists Corps wrote to his sister Katie from Rouen on 11 February:

I met Rev. Michael Adler here last night in Shool, and I can assure you I was very pleased to make his acquaintance. After the service, which was given in three languages, we sat down to a very nice spread. Mr. Adler, during his address, stated that the meeting there of so many different nations under one religion was a unique event in the history of the world. I would not have missed it for any money! ... I am going to see Mr. Adler again on Sunday if I can get away. I think he then leaves for another town ...<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Sic. In case not apparent, the age 999 was a jest.

<sup>63</sup> JM, file 2011.74.

<sup>64</sup> JM, file 2011.74.

<sup>65</sup> JC 5/3/1915, p. 12. BJBH, illustrations, p. 116 (photograph of Harris in group photograph with Adler in Rouen on 19 May 1915).

In Rouen Simms showed Adler a letter from the Army Council directing that he “was not to venture beyond the lines of communication on the chance of meeting with the adherents of my Faith”. Realising that this would considerably limit his utility, Simms intervened to enable Adler to receive permission to visit general headquarters and to meet the principal authorities there and thus, Adler wrote, successfully to lay the foundations of his future work.<sup>66</sup> From Rouen Adler travelled to Paris and Versailles. He spent the Sabbath with Grand Rabbin Levy, with whom he discussed arrangements for Passover and for burials. He then travelled to Rouen, Abbeville, Boulogne, St. Omer, Hazebrouck and Boulogne, returning to Britain on 10 March.

From the outset the absence of transport to cover a large area emerged as a serious difficulty. The YMCA office at Havre were able to lend Adler a small Ford car driven by a young curate. On his return to the UK Adler published an appeal for the YMCA, which had made a room available for him to meet Jewish soldiers and had enabled him to make many of his visits.<sup>67</sup>

In a letter of 17 March 1915, Adler reported positively to Simms on his visit. It had lasted close to seven weeks. He had visited eleven towns and cities and conducted numerous services in synagogues and camps. He had distributed the Soldiers’ Prayer Book, visited some fifty hospitals and made arrangements for continuous hospital visitation. He had arranged for sections of local military cemeteries to be consecrated for Jewish burials. He had enlisted the help of local Jewish communities. He had consulted the military authorities upon many matters of

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<sup>66</sup> BJBH, pp. 34-35. Rev. Arthur Barnett, *The Rev. Michael Adler, D.S.O., S.C.F., B.A. (1868-1944)*, in JHS, vol. 15, 1939-1945, pp. 191-194. JC 5/3/1915, p. 12. JM, correspondence in box 1007. As I discuss in section 9.1. it seems that this letter was specific to Adler rather than a standard order for all chaplains.

<sup>67</sup> BJBH, p.34. JW 10/2/1915, p.22.

religious welfare, so that difficulties should not arise in the future. Jewish soldiers everywhere had been very gratified to see him. The military authorities had given him every assistance. So had colleagues in the Chaplains Department, as they had done to Jewish soldiers. He expressed his thanks to Simms for his many kindnesses towards him.<sup>68</sup>

The *Jewish World* welcomed Adler back from France. "All [of the religious bodies] work together in perfect harmony. At the front there is a fusion of creeds.", it wrote.<sup>69</sup>

*The Times* reported on Adler's role in France:

#### Jews in the Fight.

The Rev Michael Adler, who is the first Jewish chaplain to accompany a British force in the field, has just returned to England after spending some weeks in France. As chaplain to the Jewish sailors and soldiers, Mr Adler is the shepherd of a flock which is scattered over the five continents and the seven seas. His duties took him to all the hospitals and the base towns, and enabled him to judge the organisation and the spirit which inform our Army.

'I found (said Mr Adler) that I had considerably underestimated the number of Jews who are with the British forces. I have compiled a list of many thousands, and everywhere I went I found Jewish officers and men of whom I had no previous record. Wherever possible I held services and organized the officers and men so that they might hold services for themselves. What gave me much pleasure was the way in which Jews would tramp for miles along the worst of roads in order to join us in prayer.

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<sup>68</sup> Adler's *Report of Work at the Front from Jan. to June 1916* in JM, file 2011.74.

<sup>69</sup> JW 17/3/1915, p. 10.

'On my field cap I wear a badge which is unique in the Army – the interlaced triangles, the Shield of David – and everywhere Jewish soldiers recognized it and made themselves known to me. I held services everywhere, consecrated burial grounds and ministered to the wounded and the dying. Whenever I met a Jewish soldier I made a point of writing to his people at home. ....<sup>70</sup>

Adler was also corresponding with Jewish sailors. He received a letter from a sailor called Bandall serving on *HMS Princess Royal* of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battle Cruiser Squadron.<sup>71</sup> His reply on 9 February 1915 reflects the spirit and the propaganda of the time:

Your letter about your glorious victory was splendid. You have every reason to be proud of what your grand ship and your others did on that day when the Baby Killers were taught a lesson they will never forget. God bless our Fleet – we all pray every day!

I am over here now working among our brave soldiers. How I wish I could be also among my soldiers & marines, but unhappily, it is not possible. When this War ends – in our great Victory – I hope we shall all meet to rejoice.

Glad you liked the Prayer Book. How are Simmons & Magnus?

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<sup>70</sup> *The Times* 13/3/1915, p.11; reproduced on its centenary on 13/3/2015. *The Times* had published Adler's letter on *The YMCA and Jewish Soldiers* on 9/2/1915 at p. 9. Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp. 193, 388, n. 130. Madigan and Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience: Panter Between Inclusion and Exclusion*, pp. 159-181.

<sup>71</sup> Born on 6 April 1881 as Jack Wolfe Cohen, Bandall enlisted in the navy on 5 September 1899 under the not obviously Jewish name of Woolf Bandall. Enrolled at Ostend in 1914 as a private in the Plymouth Battalion of the Royal Marines Light Infantry, he served on *HMS Princess Royal* at the Battle of Jutland of 31 May 1916, suffering burns to his face, arms and hands. He survived the war and served on various ships and shore establishments until being discharged on 4 September 1923, and died on 26 October 1966. Forces War Records. BJBH, p. 189. University of Southampton, Special Collections, MS 387, 3/1, Papers of Jeffrey Green (Bandall's nephew) re Bandal (sic).

Write to me often.

In February 1915 Rev. Solomon Lipson was appointed Jewish Chaplain to the Home Command, to minister, along with a number of officiating clergymen, to soldiers in Britain. Also in February 1915, the *Jewish World* reported about Private Labofski of Leeds, who had been at the front for five months. He wore his Tefillin all the time that he was fighting, had not received a scratch and said that it was general among Jewish soldiers to wear them “at all times of peril in battle”.<sup>72</sup>

#### 9.6. Adler in France in 1915

On his return Adler delivered a similarly positive report to the War Office.<sup>73</sup> In consequence he was informed that he could return to the front for as long as necessary. On Monday 26 April 1915, at the age of forty-six, again accompanied by Private Friedlander, he did so.<sup>74</sup> Through his own efforts he had created Jewish wartime chaplaincy in the field.

With short home leaves, Adler was to spend, including his first visit, three and a half years on the western front, until 15 July 1918. He dedicated a large part of his salary to pay for a minister for his community.<sup>75</sup> He kept four successive pocket books which he entitled “Diary of Work at the Front”.<sup>76</sup> In them, in a report and in correspondence with the Chief Rabbi <sup>77</sup> he recorded his eleven periods of time in France. His principal locations were the North Midland Casualty Clearing Station

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<sup>72</sup> JW 10/2/1915, p. 14.

<sup>73</sup> JM, file 2011.74.

<sup>74</sup> JW 21/4/1915, p.23.

<sup>75</sup> JM, file 2011.74.

<sup>76</sup> They are essentially concise records of his activities rather than narratives. I draw on them without repetitive attribution.

<sup>77</sup> LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/001 and 011. *Report of Work at the Front from Jan. to June 1916.*



which was in the monastery at Mont des Cats near the battle line and ten miles from Ypres, and various other casualty clearing stations. He was successively based within the Fourth, First, Second, Fourth, Third and First Army Areas.<sup>78</sup>

Adler organised a series of services along the whole front, which then extended from Ypres in the North to Bethune in the South, and sent out printed postcards completed with the details of each service. He kept in touch with the widely scattered camps and medical units of the forward districts. Initially the YMCA loaned him a motor car. Then, with the help of Simms and GHQ, a motor car was placed at his disposal by the army's Adjutant General. This, he wrote, was an exceptional privilege, and indispensable for his work over the huge area under his charge. He had a Magen David badge affixed to the bonnet. In his first two weeks of using it the car registered having travelled 1,015 miles. In October 1915 the authorities agreed that the car be "permanently attached" to him. In March 1916 the Army acceded to his request for a car for the second Jewish chaplain, Simmonds, although it is not clear that the car actually materialised.<sup>79</sup>

For Passover of 1915 Adler prepared a booklet including an abridged Haggadah entitled *Prayers for Jewish Sailors and Soldiers on Active Service for the Feast of Passover 5675-1915*. It was issued with the sanction of the Chief Rabbi, who composed for it a *Prayer Before a Battle*. Adler arranged leave for troops in the UK and Passover services. He appealed to the Jewish community to contribute to a Passover Military Fund to send a small box of provisions, principally matzos, to serving soldiers and sailors. The *Jewish World* supported the appeal, and by the end

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<sup>78</sup> BJBH, pp. 47, 52, 56-57.

<sup>79</sup> BJBH pp.34-35; illustrations, p.249. *Report of Work at the Front from Jan. to June 1916* and correspondence in JM, file 2011.74.

of March the community had raised almost the whole of the estimated amount required of one hundred pounds. In Paris Adler arranged for matzos to be forwarded to some twelve hundred men, of whom he supplied a list. Contrary to his instructions the matzos were sent in large crates to the main depot at Havre, where they remained unopened, as Adler learned to his annoyance when he received an official letter about three months after Passover asking him what he wished to be done with the special food that was awaiting distribution. No further attempt to supply matza to soldiers in the field was made until 1919, after the Armistice, when the Chief Rabbi was able to forward large supplies to France. In Britain offers of home hospitality over Passover for Canadian soldiers exceeded the number of men seeking it.<sup>80</sup> In May 1915 Trooper Abe Weingott wrote to Adler from Egypt; thanking him for the Pesach prayer book, he wrote that the hospitality shown to the men by the Jews in Egypt was beyond all praise, and the poorest man invited a Jewish soldier to spend Pesach at his house.<sup>81</sup>

Writing from recollection in 1979 at the age of eighty-seven, Major Henry Myer, who was later to serve with the Jewish Legion and to chronicle his experiences<sup>82</sup>, wrote, seemingly of around May 1915 after the battle of Festubert that month:

The first Padre to visit our Front Line was the Rev. Michael Adler. He was the Jewish Chaplain to the Forces and was serving with the B.E.F. He was a most unmilitary looking man with a neat auburn beard and a rather corpulent figure, but he was placid and not only did we have a very pleasant chat, but he talked to the men manning the breast-works in an unhurried way and from time to

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<sup>80</sup> BJBH, p.35. JC 5/3/1915, p. 13; 19/3/1915, p. 28; 2/4/1915, p. 13. JW 17/3/1915, pp. 10, 22-23; 24/3/1915, p. 23.

<sup>81</sup> JW 26/5/1915, p. 16.

<sup>82</sup> I discuss Myer at section 9.29.

time after he had left, members of my Company came to tell me their favourable impressions of him.<sup>83</sup>

The *Jewish World* published two letters to Adler from sailors.<sup>84</sup> One, from CPO L. Franks on *HMS Vanguard*, expressed thanks for Passover gifts.<sup>85</sup> The other was from Bandall, writing as Private W. Bandall, Royal Marines Light Infantry, *HMS Princess Royal*:

Rev. Sir. 'A Guten Yomtiff!' I am writing to let you know that I and Stoker Simmons tried to get leave to proceed, he to London, and I to Birmingham, but without any success; for as the great Sir David<sup>86</sup> himself (we were taken before the Admiral) pointed out to us 'It is the price we pay for the privilege of serving in the first line of defence' .... We (I and Simmons) have received the abridged Hagadahs, and as far as I am concerned will, if the Almighty spare me, keep the soldier's Prayer Book with the Pesachdicker one, among their Gracious Majesty's gifts. .... Once again, to you and Rev. Lipson and the other assistant Chaplains, may you all live long to enjoy many and many a Pesach to come .....

To set this in context, by July 1915 many of the sailors in the Fleet had not had any leave since the start of the war.<sup>87</sup> It seems remarkable that, even in wartime, a request, even if unprecedented, from two low ranking sailors for leave for a Jewish

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<sup>83</sup> Myer, *Soldiering of Sorts*, p. 45.

<sup>84</sup> JW 21/4/1915, p. 23.

<sup>85</sup> On 9 July 1917 *HMS Vanguard* blew up at her moorings in Scapa Flow, and all but two of her crew of 845 perished.

<sup>86</sup> Admiral Sir David Beatty.

<sup>87</sup> *The Times*, 28/7/1917, p. 7.

religious festival was escalated to Admiral Beatty, and that the sailors were taken before him.

Working as the sole Jewish chaplain on the western front, Adler enlisted the support of the Jewish communities of Havre, Rouen and Boulogne to help with the religious needs of Jewish soldiers in their areas, including arrangements for burials.<sup>88</sup> It sometimes fell to French ministers to conduct funerals of British soldiers. That of Private Sandys, who died in hospital in Boulogne, was conducted in Wimereaux by Rev. M. Weill on 17 May 1915.<sup>89</sup> At the invitation of the local managers of the YMCA Adler gave a series of addresses in various camps on the subject of “The Jews in Fiction and in Fact”.<sup>90</sup> He arranged for regular Saturday afternoon services conducted by one of the Canadian soldiers to be held in a large YMCA Hut in the north of France.<sup>91</sup>

### 9.7. The Chief Rabbi Visits the Front

From 1915 onwards there were many ecclesiastical visits to the western front by leaders of different Christian denominations, all being received at general headquarters.<sup>92</sup> From 24 June until 8 July 1915 the British Chief Rabbi, Dr Joseph Herman Hertz (25 September 1872 – 14 January 1946), made such a visit.<sup>93</sup> Accompanied by Adler he toured the front; conducted religious services, one in the open air close behind the firing line amid the noise of a heavy cannonade; visited

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<sup>88</sup> BJBH, p.34. JC 7/5/1915, p. 20. JW 5/5/1915, pp. 20-21.

<sup>89</sup> JW 9/6/1915, p. 21.

<sup>90</sup> JC 28/5/1914, pp. 14 - 15.

<sup>91</sup> JC 18/6/1915, p. 19. JW 2/6/1915, p.16.

<sup>92</sup> Snape, *God and the British Soldier*, pp. 227-228, 272 n.144.

<sup>93</sup> Born in Hungary and educated and ordained in New York, Hertz ministered in New York and from 1898 until 1911 in Johannesburg, then returning to New York. During the Anglo-Boer War President Paul Kruger attempted to deport him because of his pro-British views. With Lord Rothschild as his sponsor he became Chief Rabbi in 1913. He became a British citizen in March 1915, renouncing his American citizenship.

units, hospitals, a cemetery and general headquarters; and met with Field Marshal Sir John French and General Sir Nevil Macready, the Adjutant General. A service and reception for Jewish men was held at a soldiers' club, at which Hertz delivered an address, saying that fifteen years before he had been engaged in a similar mission to the Jewish troops in the South African War. On his return Hertz submitted a report on his visit to the Visitation Committee<sup>94</sup>, mentioning that the visit had been reported in *The Times* on 30 June and 6 July 1915. Two years later another visit by the Chief Rabbi was planned for 1 to 7 November 1917, including visits to Dominion and American troops, and Adler attended planning meetings for it, but had to be cancelled because of unforeseen circumstances, which included, Adler recorded inscrutably, the French authorities raising difficulties about his passport.<sup>95</sup>

#### 9.8. Chaplaincy Duties

Having encountered several soldiers named Cohen, Levy, Isaacs and Solomons who were Christians, Adler learned to be cautious about accepting any man as a Jew unless certain that he was.<sup>96</sup> In around August 1915<sup>97</sup> a Christian chaplain, Rev. Williams, sent Adler a nominal roll of Jews of the division to which Williams was attached. Visiting him and lunching with a group of chaplains of different denominations, when he was asked to recite the Grace in Hebrew, Adler learned that

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<sup>94</sup> I discuss the Visitation Committee in section 9.24.1.

<sup>95</sup> Taylor, *British Chief Rabbis 1664-2006*, pp. 347-349. BJBH, p. 36; illustrations, p. 249. LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/001. VC/2/14-18. JM, file 2011.74. JC 2/7/1915, p. 12; 9/7/1915, p. 14. JW 31/3/1915, pp. 9-10; 30/6/1915, p. 20; 14/7/1915, p. 19; 3/11/1915, p. 20. LI 30/7/1915, p. 469.

<sup>96</sup> Section 6.7.

<sup>97</sup> Adler wrote that he received a letter from Rev. Williams with this nominal roll shortly after he had taken up residence in the monastery at Mont des Cats. This was the location of the North Midland CCS. Adler stayed there, according to his diary, first from 27 July until 11 October 1915 and then after home leave from 24 October, there and then at another CCS, until 19 January 1916.

there would be no objection to his receiving nominal rolls of Jewish soldiers. Thenceforth he received these returns two or three times a year, a privilege, he wrote, conceded to Jewish chaplains alone and of enormous help in the organisation of their work.<sup>98</sup>

Before a Jewish service could be conducted arrangements were made through divisional headquarters for the time and place, which would be at any convenient day and hour. Secret information was given about the location of troops and when they would not actually be in the front line. At GHQ Adler was allowed to visit the O.B. (Order of Battle) Department and learn all that was necessary for his work. Staff officers were amused seeing him write down the information about the troops and movements in Hebrew, expressing the hope that no German who understood this language would capture his notebooks. Orders were issued in divisional orders about Jewish services, and Adler sent printed postcards to every Jewish officer and soldier with details of services. Reproducing one from 1916, with the details completed (here in italics):

From REV. MICHAEL ADLER, C.F., G.H.Q., BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, FRANCE. *3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian* Division. The Senior Chaplain would be pleased to meet you at a SERVICE for Jewish Soldiers to be held on *SUNDAY MARCH 19<sup>th</sup>* at *THE MONASTERY ON MONT des CATS* at *11.a.m.* precisely. Notice of the Service has been published in Orders. Please ask permission to attend. M.A.

The cards were distributed by divisional headquarters, and notices of services were put up in YMCA huts. Adler would travel between often widely dispersed units, after

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<sup>98</sup> BJBH, pp.36-37.

arranging by telegram to have the Jewish soldiers assembled for him. He conducted services every Sunday and frequently in the week. He wrote that men were eager to attend services, sometimes under the most difficult conditions and after long journeys.<sup>99</sup>

Services took place in the open air, YMCA or Church Army huts, barns or ruined buildings, disused churches, village town halls, orderly rooms, once in a marquee erected for the purpose by divisional headquarters and once at a famous hospice.<sup>100</sup> On one occasion the YMCA offered its “quiet room” for Adler to hold a service and then supplied all of the Jewish soldiers with tea, as many had come from long distances.<sup>101</sup>

As soon as Adler heard that a soldier had arrived in France he sent him a postcard to initiate a correspondence. He asked every Jewish soldier whom he met for details and the address of his family, and wrote to the family of every soldier whom he met at services or elsewhere.<sup>102</sup> In this way he would have become known to many Jewish families in Britain who had a soldier serving on the western front, and have become a key channel of communication between them and the army. He came to fulfil a similar role at the institutional level of the community, attending whilst on leave some of the meetings of the Visitation Committee and of the Jewish War Services Committee.<sup>103</sup>

By the summer of 1916 Adler was receiving an average of thirty letters a day. His heavy postbag was a standing joke at the local Army post office and in his mess. He

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<sup>99</sup> BJBH, p.38. *Report of Work at the Front from Jan. to June 1916.*

<sup>100</sup> BJBH, pp.38-39.

<sup>101</sup> JC 18/6/1915, p. 19.

<sup>102</sup> BJBH, p. 39.

<sup>103</sup> I discuss this at section 9.24.

told soldiers that the address “Jewish chaplain, France” was sufficient to find him. One soldier directed his letter to the “Commander in Chief of the Jewish Army in France”. He was also given the title “O. C. Jews”.<sup>104</sup> In October 1917 he received an anonymous postcard, addressing him as “The Chief Rabbi of the Jews serving in the British Imperial Army in France”. Signed “An Englishman”, its message was: “Sir, Good luck to you and your brethren serving in the British Imperial Army.”<sup>105</sup>

From the Jewish Chaplains’ Office at Adler’s Central Synagogue, Rev. S. Lipson, who had been appointed to the Home Command, issued a notice to Jewish soldiers proceeding to the front inviting them to contact Adler on leaving the base towns in France and Simmons if they were stationed in the Boulogne area. Rev. Vivian Simmons arrived in Boulogne in August 1915, and prepared a pro forma notice inviting men of the Jewish faith to meet him, at a date, time and place which he would complete.<sup>106</sup>

### 9.9. 1915 continues

Adler’s diaries list his activities. These included meeting with new chaplains as they arrived and subsequently; innumerable religious services on Sabbaths and festivals; visits to front line trenches and to units; visits to hospitals and casualty clearing stations; conducting funerals; visits to graves and cemeteries; visits to prisoner of war cages and camps; meetings with army authorities; and chaplaincy meetings. On occasion these duties extended to soldiers from counties of the empire; Adler conducted funerals of South African and Canadian soldiers and of one from Australia. On Sabbaths he walked to the places that he visited, as Jewish Law

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<sup>104</sup> BJBH, pp. 39-40.

<sup>105</sup> JC 5/10/1017, p. 14. *Report of Work at the Front from Jan. to June 1916.*

<sup>106</sup> JM, file 2011.74.



required. Christian chaplains and commanding officers sometimes wrote to him asking him to arrange Jewish services. He had often to travel long distances to do so but was rewarded, he wrote, by the large number of men who attended. Living close to the Belgian frontier at a military hospital he visited all of the camps and billets for many miles around and arranged services for men of the Canadian Division. In August 1915 the Principal Chaplain instructed him to style himself henceforth "Senior Jewish Chaplain".<sup>107</sup>

For the High Holydays of 1915 the Office of the Chief Rabbi published a booklet entitled *Prayers for Jewish Sailors and Soldiers on Active Service*, and services and receptions for Jewish soldiers on furlough were held at various synagogues in London and at army camps in Britain.<sup>108</sup> The Adjutant-General acceded to Adler's request that any Jewish soldier be permitted to select his days of ordinary leave over a period of two months, including two days for the Day of Atonement, and Adler issued a notice to Jewish soldiers to that effect. With the cooperation of the authorities he held as many services as he could during New Year and the Day of Atonement in 1915, attended by British and Canadian soldiers. He and Simmons separately held services at Boulogne, the soldiers' club at General Headquarters and locations within three miles of the firing line. Adler took to the services a Scroll of the

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<sup>107</sup> BJBH, pp.39-40. *Report of Work at the Front from Jan. to June 1916*. JC 27/8/1915, p. 14; 22/10/1915, p. 14. JW 25/8/1915, p. 22. In December 1915 Simms as Principal Chaplain selected one chaplain to head each of the four major chaplaincy groupings for which he was responsible, namely Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Wesleyan and United Board (Baptist, Congregational, Primitive Methodist and United Methodist) and instructed them to use the title 'Senior (Presbyterian, etc.) Chaplain'. Hence his instruction to Adler. Howson, *Muddling Through*, pp. 44-48. 101.

<sup>108</sup> BJBH, pp.40-42. JC 13/8/1915, p. 15; 17/9/1915, pp. 21, 23; 1/10/1915, p. 11; 15/10/1915, p. 17. JW 15/9/1915, p. 14; 22/9/1915, p. 17.

Law in a box which served as an Ark and which had been lent to him by Boulogne Synagogue.<sup>109</sup>

For the Day of Atonement, Adler stayed at a village close to the firing line. Some two hundred men attended the first of several services which Adler conducted during the day, which lasted for three hours. At headquarters the Presbyterian chaplain prepared the tent of the officers' mess for the purpose. Many of the men who came had been serving since the outbreak of the war. Men marched in fully equipped straight from the lines. Many came from long distances, some from divisions within ten miles around, including Canadians from many units. "... hearty cheers for the Senior Chaplain was given before the gatherings dispersed." A large number of the men were under immediate orders to proceed to the trenches. "... the knowledge that a fierce struggle was shortly about to take place seemed to add an air of solemnity to our prayers which no words of mine could adequately depict", Adler wrote. Two men who had promised to attend were killed by shrapnel on the evening of the Day of Atonement.

Many of the officers and men who had attended the Day of Atonement services in France fell in action a week later on Saturday 25 September when the Army "went over the top" at the Battle of Loos. During the battle, in September-October 1915, Adler made daily visits to field ambulances, dressing stations and casualty clearing stations and saw for the first time the dreadful sight of thousands of wounded and dying men being brought in. He frequently acted as interpreter with German wounded, several of whom were Jews, and found many opportunities to be of help in the work of attending to the patients who poured into the three casualty clearing

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<sup>109</sup> JM, file 2011.74.

stations in the area. He called at every battalion headquarters to learn what Jewish casualties had occurred. He learned that a Jewish soldier from Russia who had enlisted in Glasgow and spoke very imperfect English had called out to the German trenches during the advance “Kim Arois”, meaning in Yiddish “come out”, and the Germans had understood him.<sup>110</sup>

On 19 November 1915 the *Jewish Chronicle* published a War Number, with pages of photographs, including “Ministers Gazetted for Chaplain Service”. These were Revs Lipson, Adler and Simmons, together with Rev. A. A. Gelar.<sup>111</sup> In Britain the twenty third Annual Chanukah Military Service took place at the Central Synagogue. Drawn from almost every branch of the services, more men attended than at probably any of the pre-war Chanukah services, as did several nurses in uniform. Rev. E. Spero officiated, Rev. Lipson delivered an address invoking the heroism of the Maccabees and Sergeant Issy Smith V.C. who was Jewish spoke.<sup>112</sup> Services took place on the same day elsewhere in Britain.<sup>113</sup>

Soldiers and sailors wrote to the *Jewish Chronicle* with their experiences of attending Adler’s services. One wrote that seventeen men had attended a service conducted by Rev. M. Adler in a Catholic monastery; most had travelled ten to fifteen miles from the firing line and were covered in mud from head to foot.<sup>114</sup> Adler’s correspondence extended beyond the UK and the western front. Chief Petty Officer M. Coevorden, the Chief Writer aboard *HMS Ophir*, wrote that he was the only Jew on board his

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<sup>110</sup> BJBH, p.42. JW 22/9/1915, p. 17.

<sup>111</sup> JC 19/11/1915, p. XI. Of Rev. A. A. Gelar I have found no trace; perhaps this was a mistake for Rev. A. A. Green, who had hoped to become a chaplain but became an officiating clergyman, as I discuss in section 9.16

<sup>112</sup> LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/006.

<sup>113</sup> BJBH, pp. 45-46. JM, file 2011.74. JC 10/12/1915, pp. 21, 23. JW 8/12/1915, pp.16-17.

<sup>114</sup> JC 10/12/1915, p. 20; 31/12/1915, p.15. JW 8/12/1915, pp. 15-16; 12/1/1916, p.22.

ship. He treasured the prayer book which he had received from Rev. M. Adler, and had received correspondence from Rev. S. Lipson.<sup>115</sup> Private L. Staale of the 4<sup>th</sup> Hampshire Regiment wrote to Adler from Kut-al-Amara in Mesopotamia that he had found a synagogue and attended services as often as he could. He was the only British Jewish soldier whom they had ever seen. There were about a thousand Jews there, and people treated him as only Jewish people could. He hoped to read the service at the synagogue next Saturday.<sup>116</sup>

Rev. Simon Grajewsky was appointed in December 1915 as a Jewish chaplain in Egypt and in March 1916 as visiting chaplain to the Jewish wounded in Alexandria.<sup>117</sup>

#### 9.10. The Year 1916

The first Military Service Act was passed on 5 January 1916, providing for conscription for single men. It was followed by a second Military Service Act on 3 May 1916 extending conscription to married men. The upper age limit was 41, rising to 51 in April 1918.<sup>118</sup> Arrangements were made for Jewish men who had been called upon to report between 15 and 25 April 1916 to report on 26 April, to enable them to observe Passover.<sup>119</sup>

On 27 March 1916 Adler encountered the Australian Seventh Brigade, recently arrived from Egypt and awaiting inspection from the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Douglas Haig. With them were two chaplains, one Church of England and one Catholic. Whilst Adler was talking with them, Haig, arrived, attended by his private

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<sup>115</sup> JC 24/12/1915, p. 14. JW 25/8/1915, pp. 22-23; 29/9/1915, p. 13; 22/12/1915, p.19.

<sup>116</sup> JC 10/12/1915, p. 20.

<sup>117</sup> JC 31/3/1916, p.14.

<sup>118</sup> Lloyd, *Jews under Fire*, pp.69 n. 223, 86-87.

<sup>119</sup> JW 12/4/1916, p. 17. JM, file 2011.74.

secretary, Sir Phillip Sassoon. The three chaplains took up position at the end of the inspection line. When he reached them, Haig leaned over from his horse, shook hands with them, asked their names and forms of religion and said to them: "I am glad to see how you chaplains of different denominations are working in so friendly a spirit together. You can help us very much in our difficult work by teaching the men the sacred cause for which we are fighting."<sup>120</sup> Haig, who became the Commander-in-Chief of the BEF in December 1915, spoke frequently of the justice of the Allied cause. In January 1916 he told a conference of army commanders, and recorded in his diary that they agreed, that "We must have large minded, sympathetic men as Parsons, who realise the *Great Cause* for which we are fighting, and can imbue their hearers with enthusiasm. Any clergyman who is not fit for this work must be sent home."<sup>121</sup> At the end of April 1916 Adler together with Rev. V. G. Simmons conducted under fire a service for Australian and South African troops.<sup>122</sup>

Rev. Michael Stanhope Walker was the rector of a country parish in Lincolnshire. Serving on the Somme at no. 21 CCS near Corbie, at the junction of the Rivers Somme and Ancre, he recorded in his diary on 3 July 1916, "Now 4 a.m, the Jewish chief rabbi has joined us". On 7 July he wrote that:

Chief Rabbi Adler is quite an interesting man to have in the mess and is quite as much at home quoting and discussing from the Gospel or Saint Paul as the Old Testament. He has an officer son.

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<sup>120</sup> Boas, p. 167.

<sup>121</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp. 219-221. I have not encountered specific evidence of the Jewish chaplains having done this, although they may have spoken of the Allied cause at religious services.

<sup>122</sup> Boas, p. 168, with chronology identified by reference to Adler's diary.

On occasion stress was relieved by horse play. At dinner on 21 July water was being emptied and sprayed at people, and “the Interpreter and the Rabbi got a good soaking”.<sup>123</sup>

In July 1916 divisions were passing through Adler’s area on their way to the Battle of the Somme. Adler hastily organised meetings of Jewish soldiers, encountering for the first time South African soldiers. Many of the men gave him messages for their families should they not return. Adler recorded that during July he made many visits to casualty clearing stations to be near the Somme fighting.<sup>124</sup> He used the press to seek information about soldiers who were missing, such as Private H. Shilling of the London Regiment, who had been reported wounded on 21 May 1916.<sup>125</sup>

Simmons ministered to the Australian troops until the arrival of their chaplain, Rev. D.I. Freedman in July 1916.<sup>126</sup> By that time Revs Michael Adler, Vivian Simmons and David Freedman had been stationed on the western front and Arthur Barnett, who had been appointed in March 1916, was in charge of the base towns.<sup>127</sup> In August 1916 the *Jewish Chronicle* and the *Jewish World* published:

Notice to Jewish Soldiers Proceeding to France. All soldiers upon landing in France are asked to write at once to the Senior Jewish Chaplain, the Rev. Michael Adler, G.H.Q., B.E.F. They should give full particulars of their units, and Mr. Adler will inform them of the Chaplain nearest to them. The Jewish Chaplains in France in addition to Mr. Adler are Rev. V.G. Simmons, 2<sup>nd</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Moynihan, *People at War*, pp. 69-84, esp. 69-70, 73-74, 77.

<sup>124</sup> BJBH, p.47.

<sup>125</sup> JW 26/7/1916, p.9.

<sup>126</sup> BJBH, p.47.

<sup>127</sup> JC 7/7/1916, p. 18. JW 12/7/1916, p. 15.

Army, Rev. A. Barnett, A.P.O., Boulogne, Rev. D. I. Freedman, Australian Corps.<sup>128</sup>

In August 1916 Lipson met with the War Office at the latter's request to confirm that an order was about to be issued for leave to be granted for the High Holydays.<sup>129</sup> On the western front it was not however to be. Adler wrote:

The Rev. Michael Adler, S. C. F., notifies to the Jewish soldiers at the Front: 'It is greatly regretted that, owing to the present condition of military operations, no leave can be arranged for the New Year and the Day of Atonement for soldiers on active service. Every effort will be made to organise services in the field, of which due notice will be given to the men concerned.' We understand that the four Chaplains will be living close up to the front and will arrange services for the sacred days.<sup>130</sup>

A fifth Jewish chaplain, Rev. Louis Morris, was appointed in September 1916 to serve on the western front.<sup>131</sup> For the New Year of 1916 Adler held a service on the first day, Thursday 28 September, at 10.00 a.m. in Acq, in the Arras sector, in a cinema theatre. The soldiers termed such places Adler's "cinema-gogues". After a two hour journey in his car, taking his Ark and Sefer Torah, Adler held a second service at 3.00.p.m.in an area near Doullens, in a Royal Flying Corps hangar. Army and RFC men attended, including 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Mechanic W. Warshawski, who wrote to the *Jewish World* about it.<sup>132</sup> On the morning of the second day Adler held a service in Senlis, near to Albert, in a YMCA building, which was filled with men who had come

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<sup>128</sup> JC 18/8/1916, p. 12. JW 16/8/1916, p. 14; 13/9/1916, p. 10.

<sup>129</sup> LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/021.

<sup>130</sup> JC 15/9/1916, pp. 6, 11. JW 13/9/1916, p. 14.

<sup>131</sup> JC 6/10/1916, p. 18.

<sup>132</sup> JW 18/10/1916, p. 14.

directly from the trenches. They begged Adler to come again on the Day of Atonement on Saturday 7 October. This he did, officiating at 10.00 a.m. to about three hundred and fifty men in the cinema theatre at Acq and at 3.00 p.m. to three hundred men in the one at Albert, about fifty miles away, arriving over an hour late as the roads were choked with marching troops and guns. Other men whom he had hoped would attend the afternoon service had gone “over the top” that morning. For these services divisional headquarters suggested allotting a number of lorries to each unit, meeting the men behind the trenches and bringing them to the services to save them the fatigue of a long tramp; thenceforth this was done on every important holiday, largely increasing the numbers of men attending.<sup>133</sup>

On 16 October 1916 Adler wrote a report to the Chief Rabbi on services held for the High Holydays. Ten New Year services were conducted: two by Simmons, two by Barnett, two by Freedman, one by Morris and three by Adler. That conducted by Morris was at Etaples, and was attended by over one hundred men; the others were held within a few miles of the front line. On the Day of Atonement twenty services were held. Many of the services were held in YMCA huts; others in numerous localities were conducted by Jewish officers or men. In Boulogne, Havre and Rouen there were facilities for Jewish soldiers to attend local services. On the Day of Atonement an order was issued by base commandants for all Jewish soldiers to be exempt from duty for the whole day.<sup>134</sup>

Adler had to cover such huge distances that he became known in France as the “Wandering Jew”; in August 1916, for example, he expended petrol for 1,670

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<sup>133</sup> BJBH, pp.49-50. University of Southampton, Special Collections, MS 125, Papers of Michael Adler.

<sup>134</sup> BJBH, pp.49-50. LMA, ACC/2805/04/05/008. JW 11/10/1916, p. 9; 18/10/1916, p. 14.



miles.<sup>135</sup> During 1916 he unsuccessfully sought the temporary and local rank of lieutenant-colonel (two ranks above that of captain). In November 1916 he was promoted to that of major (one rank above).<sup>136</sup> The *Jewish World* eulogised his achievements.<sup>137</sup> Once in the winter of 1916 at Beaumont Hamel Adler was suspected by a zealous officer who did not recognise his chaplaincy badge of being a spy, and escaped arrest only through the intervention of the local Town Major.<sup>138</sup> As the army had restricted Christmas leave, the annual Chanukah Military Service in London was not held in 1916, although services were held at Manchester, Norwich, Westgate and elsewhere.<sup>139</sup>

### 9.11. The Year 1917

In January 1917 Adler was mentioned in despatches. The *Jewish Chronicle* applauded:

Much satisfaction will be felt in the community at the fact that the Senior Jewish Chaplain, Major the Rev. M. Adler, was mentioned in General Haig's last despatch. The honour is thoroughly well deserved. At the outbreak of the war Mr Adler had to organise practically a new branch of communal work – a branch of which the community had practically no experience – and to do so under the stress of an unexampled emergency. He has carried out the task with signal ability and success, and the whole community owes him a deep debt of gratitude. At the same time, however, the honour he has received from the distinguished Commander of the British Forces in France is a welcome

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<sup>135</sup> BJBH, p.47.

<sup>136</sup> VC/2/31-34. Visitation Committee correspondence at JM, box 1005. JC 10/11/1916, p. 13. *L'Univers Israélite* 8/12/1916, p. 258.

<sup>137</sup> JW 15/11/1916, pp. 6-7, 15.

<sup>138</sup> BJBH, p. 50.

<sup>139</sup> JC 15/12/1916, p. 16. JW 13/12/1916, p. 13.

recognition of the status and the work of the large number of Jewish soldiers on the various fronts.<sup>140</sup>

1917 saw the largest expansion of Jewish chaplaincy. Six chaplains were appointed to the western front: Revs Benjamin Lieberman in January, Marks Gollop in March, Ephraim Levy in June, John Geffen in July, David Hirsch in August and Harris Price in October. By the time of the High Holyday services there was a Jewish chaplain in each of the five Army areas and three at the bases. In Egypt Rabbi Yitzhak Frankenthal was appointed in June.<sup>141</sup> On 14 June 1917 Adler had an interview with Major General John Monash of the Third Australian Division, who was Jewish.<sup>142</sup> In a series of letters home from 1916 until he was killed in 1917, Lieutenant Marcus Segal of the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment described his attempts to adhere to his Judaism in the trenches, including on Succot putting leaves atop his dug-out as if a succah.<sup>143</sup>

Bapaume had been captured by the Australians, who had patched up a cinema which they dubbed the "Fair Dinkum Theatre". For the New Year and Day of Atonement services on 17 and 26 September 1917, an Australian Jewish sergeant took charge of arrangements, fitting up a reading desk with electric lights. The vast congregations - twelve hundred and fifteen hundred respectively, Adler recorded - included American engineers attached to the British Army, a party of Egyptian Jews with a Labour Company and men from all the parts of the Empire. The shofar was blown by a soldier of the 4<sup>th</sup> London Regiment who had been a bugler in the Jewish

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<sup>140</sup> JC 12/1/1917, p. 7.

<sup>141</sup> BJBH, p.50.

<sup>142</sup> Boas, p. 170. Monash was the most senior soldier of the Jewish faith to serve in British and Imperial forces in the First World War, and is referred to at several points below.

<sup>143</sup> JM, file 2009.153. Illustration 2.

Lads' Brigade. Lieutenant-Colonel F.D. Samuel read part of the service on the Day of Atonement, and the town mayor served out extra rations for a large number of men.<sup>144</sup> In October 1917 the *Jewish Chronicle* published various graphic accounts from soldiers of the services.<sup>145</sup>

On 28 October 1917 a service at Barastre for the 62<sup>nd</sup> Division had to be cancelled at the last moment, as the battalion had been rushed to the trenches that morning to resist an attack. At the second Battle of Cambrai in November 1917 Adler was called to bury two soldiers, one a German. Due to a German counter-attack field hospitals and casualty clearing stations were being evacuated. Seeing the cavalry galloping up to drive back the Germans, it was necessary to escape as quickly as possible. Adler wrote that his faithful chauffeur Corporal Macintosh, who was with him for three years, sent the car flying along the road.<sup>146</sup>

### 9.12. The Year 1918

In the New Year Honours List of 1918 Adler was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO).<sup>147</sup> Returning to France from leave on 7 January 1918, he spent the severe winter at the casualty clearing station living in an Armstrong hut made of canvas stretched on wood. He wrote that he was fortunate to meet there a body of medical men with a keen interest in Judaism and Jewish history and he delivered several lectures on these subjects to officers, nurses and men. As a rule he and his fellow chaplains found it most convenient for their work to be attached to medical units, both at the front and at the bases, and found many friends among the doctors

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<sup>144</sup> BJBH, p.52. University of Southampton, Special Collections, MS 125, Papers of Michael Adler.

<sup>145</sup> JC 5/10/1917, p. 10; although said to be continued on p.14, it is not.

<sup>146</sup> BJBH, pp.52-53.

<sup>147</sup> London Gazette 28/12/1917, 30450, p. 17. I cannot locate the citation. The DSO was awarded for service rather than for gallantry.

and surgeons. He noted that as a rule German aviators did not attack British hospitals, although there were exceptions, sometimes because they were near railway lines or dumps or camps. Adler was called upon to bury a Jewish sergeant of the USA infantry who had died of wounds received during his first tour of instruction in the British trenches, and had to conduct the ceremony under continuous shellfire with everybody wearing tin hats. In February 1918 Adler was again mentioned in despatches.<sup>148</sup>

1918 saw the appointment of six Jewish chaplains. Four were appointed to the western front: Revs Israel Brodie in January, Nehemiah Goldston in February, Nathan Levine in July and Henry Silverman in November. In January Rev. Leib Falk was appointed to the Jewish Legion, which was departing for Palestine.<sup>149</sup> In October Rev. Walter Levin was appointed, serving in Italy and then in Egypt.<sup>150</sup>

In March 1918 during the Ludendorff Offensive and the resumption of the war of movement Adler was caught up in the great retreat in which Bapaume, Achiet le Grand and Albert fell. The Passover services which had been arranged for Bapaume and Arras could not take place, and Adler conducted a Passover Seder service in a tent with a few members of the unit. During the meal which consisted of bully and a few matzos which he had managed to save from the loss of much of his property he recited the Seder service from the Soldiers' Prayer Book by the light of a candle, reading it aloud in English to his brother officers who were deeply interested in the coincidence of their flight with that of the Exodus from Egypt. The second night he

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<sup>148</sup> BJBH, pp. 51-52, 55-56. JC 7/12/1917, p. 17; 1/3/1918, p. 10. Kitching, *Britain's Jews in the First World War*, p. 161.

<sup>149</sup> I discuss this in section 9.29.

<sup>150</sup> I discuss this in sections 9.27.14. and 9.28.3.-5.

and a Jewish soldier whom he met observed the Seder together with some fragments of matzo in the orderly room of the man's unit.<sup>151</sup>

April 1918 saw an extension of the terms of the Military Service Act raising the military service age from forty to fifty and in a national emergency to fifty-five. As a Bill it included a provision extending the obligation of military service to ministers of religion. Perhaps because of opposition from nonconformist ministers in Wales and perhaps fearing an Irish rebellion if Roman Catholic priests were conscripted, the Government withdrew this provision, stating that inclusion of clergymen would curtail religious ministrations and would make only a slight addition to manpower.<sup>152</sup>

### 9.13. Troops from the United States

On the western front American troops were arriving into the British camps. The 77<sup>th</sup> Division, consisting largely of Jewish soldiers from New York City, was training in Adler's area. Without their own Jewish chaplain, the American staff readily accepted Adler's proposal to act as their chaplain and, he wrote, the men welcomed him very warmly. It was a considerable time before any number of American Jewish chaplains came to France; in the meantime the Jewish chaplains on the western front, who were all English, did what they could to minister to the Americans. The last important service which Adler held before he fell ill was in a barn and was attended by about one hundred and fifty American and the same number of British troops and a group of tall New Zealanders. Adler received grateful acknowledgements in reply to his letters to the parents of the New York soldiers. Soon afterwards, on 8 June, an American chaplain, Rabbi D. Tannenbaum, visited Adler "and began that work of

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<sup>151</sup> BJBH, pp.56-57.

<sup>152</sup> Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing*, p. 280. *The Times*, 17 and 19/4/1918, reproduced on its centenary in *The Times*, 17 and 19/4/2018, p. 28.

cooperation which bound English and American chaplains in the common bond of interest".<sup>153</sup>

American Rabbi Lee J. Levinger<sup>154</sup> arrived in France in the autumn of 1918. He recorded that the British Jewish Chaplains were well equipped with suitable prayer books and other material, and that whilst he was on the British front at Boulogne he obtained from British chaplain Geffen a large number of army prayer books. He met Barnett, who had succeeded Adler as Senior Jewish Chaplain. A group of about forty American soldiers told him of the Holy Day services which had been conducted by a British Jewish Chaplain. He noted that the lack of transport made it impossible for the British Jewish Chaplains completely to fulfil their duties. He followed the widespread practice of travelling on passing British lorries, sometimes using as many as a dozen in one day, until in January 1919 he collected in Paris one of the Ford cars which the Jewish Welfare Board in America had sent for each of the American Jewish Chaplains.<sup>155</sup>

#### 9.14. Adler's Return to Britain

In May 1918 Adler informed the JWSC that he had decided to relinquish his position in France and asked for the appointment of a successor. He seems not to have had a chaplaincy contract, and the decision seems to have been his own, taken before his health worsened. From 24 to 27 May Barnett visited Adler, who recorded that this was "re my proposed resignation". On 15 June Adler again saw Sir John Monash, by then the GOC of the Anzac Corps and the most senior Jewish officer in the imperial

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<sup>153</sup> BJBH, pp. 57-58.

<sup>154</sup> Sections 3.5. and 8.

<sup>155</sup> Levinger, *A Jewish Chaplain in France*, pp. 10-12, 28, 32-33, 61, 66, 82.

forces, probably to take his leave.<sup>156</sup> On 1 July a service which had previously been arranged was taken by Barnett. In July, immediately before the final Allied counter-offensive, Adler's health broke down, and he was hospitalised with neurasthenia. With, he wrote, the deepest regret he was obliged to leave France, and on 15 July, declared "fit for home duty only", he returned permanently to Britain. He later wrote that he was invalided home.<sup>157</sup>

I have not encountered any other evidence about Adler's health. After three years at the front he seems to have realised in the spring of 1918 that it was worsening. The term neurasthenia was applied to officers, whilst for other ranks the same condition was described as shell shock. After more than three years continuous service at the front, with only some home leaves, Adler's diagnosis of neurasthenia may or may not have been a mental breakdown, for which this term was sometimes a euphemism. The Australian Rev. Jacob Danglow<sup>158</sup> arrived in London in July 1918, and met with Adler, whom he had known in London some fifteen years previously. "He was horrified to see that his contemporary, the senior English Jewish chaplain Michael Adler, appeared to be a 'broken man'. It had been four years since he had last seen him and the stress of savage trench war had left its mark."<sup>159</sup> Danglow had not yet been to the front and Adler may have been the first person with long service at the front whom he encountered.

The War Office gave Adler two months leave, and he was declared fit for home duties only. In October he succeeded Lipson as the Senior Jewish Chaplain in the

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<sup>156</sup> Boas, p. 170. Adler later placed this meeting during the critical days of April 1918, but his diary records it as 15 June.

<sup>157</sup> Boas, p. 170. Lloyd, *Jews under Fire*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>158</sup> I discuss him in section 9.22.5.

<sup>159</sup> Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, p.96.

Home Command. He visited the Aldershot Command with Simmons, preached and addressed the many Jewish soldiers over tea at their club in Aldershot. At a fortnightly meeting of chaplains of all denominations he spoke for over an hour on his experiences, especially from a religious point of view, at the front. He gave a lecture to a crowded audience on "A Chaplain's Life in France 1914-1918".<sup>160</sup>

The *Jewish Chronicle* in its review of the Jewish year congratulated Adler on his excellent work as Senior Chaplain in France.<sup>161</sup> In October 1918 it wrote:

The number of chaplains with the fighting forces has to be doubled, and Mr Adler is conducting a fight with synagogue wardens to obtain their best ministers for a period of service at the front. As the Chief Rabbi's appeal to his fellow-ministers to volunteer for combatant service<sup>162</sup> has so far fallen upon deaf ears, the least one would expect is that there would be no shortage of suitable aspirants for chaplaincies. Even before General Allenby completed his occupation of Palestine there was an urgent need of a competent Jewish chaplain in the Holy Land; that need has now become greater and more imperative.<sup>163</sup>

The last statement was wrong, for Falk was with the Jewish Legion in Palestine and Frankenthal, Grajewsky and Della Pergola were serving in Egypt and Palestine.<sup>164</sup>

In 1922 Adler reflected:

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<sup>160</sup> JC 4/10/1918, p. 8.

<sup>161</sup> JC 6/9/1918, p. 8.

<sup>162</sup> I have not been able to ascertain anything about this.

<sup>163</sup> JC 25/10/1918, p. 15.

<sup>164</sup> I discuss this in sections 9.28. and 9.29.



My principal sources of satisfaction in looking back at my varied war experiences are afforded by two considerations, of which the first is that I found ample opportunities to perform useful work, and the second that the reputation of the Jewish soldier on the Western front stood very high and reflected the fullest credit upon the good name of Anglo-Jewry.<sup>165</sup>

This seems to articulate Adler's considered reflection upon his service and that of the British Jewish chaplains. If as a highly intelligent man he was troubled by the phenomenon of Jews fighting and killing fellow Jews, I have not discovered him to have expressed it. The duty of soldiers to kill inevitably troubled many chaplains, even without the additional dimension of Jews killing Jews, and each had to deal with it as best he might. But one doubts whether in 1922 Adler would have repeated his lurid rhetoric in February 1915 of "baby killers", doubtless based upon German atrocities in Belgium and written after only some two weeks in France.<sup>166</sup>

#### 9.15. Adler's Correspondence with Chief Rabbi Hertz

Throughout the war Adler maintained a regular correspondence with Chief Rabbi Hertz in London.<sup>167</sup> The correspondence is wide ranging, covering, amongst other matters, Adler's first visit to France in 1915, arrangements for the Chief Rabbi's visit in 1915 and his later aborted visit in 1917, services, leave for festivals, hospital visitation, the prayer book produced for soldiers and sailors and later its revised edition, the booklet produced for Passover, the burial service, the *Book of Jewish Thoughts*, the consecration of a cemetery in 1915 (for which the Chief Rabbi gave

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<sup>165</sup> BJBH, p.58.

<sup>166</sup> Section 9.5.

<sup>167</sup> LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/001. Adler's correspondence is lost, probably when his library was destroyed, together with the records of his Central Synagogue, during the bombing in the Second World War, but Hertz's correspondence survives.

the order of service) and arrangements for officiating clergymen. In September 1914 Hertz reproached Adler for the appointment of the Reform minister Rev. J. Phillips as chaplain to Jewish soldiers at Manchester. He wrote:

.....the appointment of a Reform minister to such a post may give rise to unpleasant criticism and cause unnecessary friction in the Community ..... I am sorry that you did not consult me unofficially before making the appointment ....

In September 1915 Adler wrote "I have witnessed terrible sights since Saturday – the aftermath of an awful battle which is still raging not far away. I have buried one Jewish officer already, a nephew of Mr Albert Woolf." In March 1916 Hertz vetoed until after the war a suggestion by Adler for a memorial service for the fallen. The Chief Rabbi became a member of a commission for the re-internment of soldiers killed in action, accompanied by religious services.<sup>168</sup>

#### 9.16. Other Chaplaincy Issues

Jewish soldiers were asked to fill in and return immediately a postcard requesting their regiment number, rank, full name, unit, location of unit, married or single, full name of nearest relative, address of nearest relative, "Have you a Prayer Book?" and date. Another postcard, pre-addressed to the JWSC for men admitted to hospital in the UK, asked for their regimental number, rank, name in full, unit and the name and address of the hospital. The records of the JWSC also contain an undated unaddressed pro forma letter, with the printed date "..... 1916" to be completed, from "Rev. Michael Adler, Senior Jewish Chaplain British Expeditionary Force, France", which reads:

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<sup>168</sup> LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/005.

Dear Sir,

I was very pleased to meet your son at the Front yesterday. He is perfectly well. I hope to see him often.

Yrs sincerely

Michael Adler

During the First World War a number of people convicted of espionage were executed in the Tower of London. One was Albert Meyer, believed to be either a German or a Turkish citizen, whose letters addressed to a known German spy bureau in the Hague were intercepted by British Postal Censorship. Described in accounts in 1920 and 1922 as “a little Jew” and “an insignificant-looking little Jew”, he was court martialled on 5-6 November and sentenced to death, to be carried out on Saturday 27 November, later deferred to Thursday 2 December, 1915.<sup>169</sup>

On Thursday 25 November 1915 Rev. A.A. Green wrote to Mr P. Ornstien, the secretary of the Visitation Committee<sup>170</sup>, to say that the War Office had called upon him to attend a Jew condemned for espionage who was to be executed at the Tower of London very early on Saturday morning. Green had been to see him today and was sleeping at the Tower tomorrow night. As he would have to spend Sabbath in the City for this purpose there would be a charge (as small as he could make it) for his meals and he would submit a memo about this. On 8 December 1915 Mr Ornstien wrote to the War Office to say that the Visitation Committee had learned that a spy of the Jewish religion had recently been ordered to be shot on a Saturday

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<sup>169</sup> Felstead, *German Spies at Bay*, pp. 156-158. Thomson, *Queer People*, pp. 160-161. Sellers, *Shot in the Tower*, pp. 158-163. Morton, *Spies of the First World War*, pp.118-120. National Archives files WO/141/83; WO 94/103, docs. S, T, ZH, ZJ.

<sup>170</sup> I discuss this in section 9.24.1.

and a Jewish minister had been requested to afford him religious consolation on this solemn occasion. There had been a respite and the execution had been carried out on a Thursday. The Committee requested that in such an event the execution should not be fixed for a Jewish Sabbath or Festival, in the interests of both the condemned man and the feelings of the Jewish minister who might be called upon for duty on such an occasion. Three days later the War Office replied saying that effect would be given to the request should the necessity arise.<sup>171</sup>

Several courts-martial of Jewish soldiers were brought to Adler's notice. On four occasions when men appealed to him for assistance, Adler engaged the services of Jewish officers who belonged to the legal profession, with, he wrote, satisfactory results. On 2 October 1915 he attended the court martial of Rifleman J. Landsberg at GHQ. On 29 September 1917 he attended the court martial of Private L. H. Jacobs of 235 Machine Gun Company at Schram Barracks at Arras. Jacobs, who had asked to see Adler, was acquitted on a charge of cowardice. On 2 October 1917 a court martial at Thillooy was postponed. On 6 July 1918, as no legally qualified officer was available, Adler acted as prisoner's friend at the court martial at 21 Casualty Clearing Station of Private D. Bennett of the RAMC, who had been rude to his NCO and disobeyed orders. Adler did his best to defend him, but without success. Throughout the whole war Adler heard of only one case of a Jewish soldier being shot for cowardice, and the man was entered in his battalion as a member of the Church of England.<sup>172</sup>

Jewish officers could be unreceptive to chaplains. On 12 April 1916 Green wrote again to Ornstien, on his stationery as "The Rev. A.A. Green, Officiating Clergyman

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<sup>171</sup> JM, file 2011.74.

<sup>172</sup> BJBH, p. 45.

to the Jewish Troops in the Counties of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. (Authority: E.C., No. 2/701515(A.)-)". Alluding to his having sought and been refused a chaplaincy commission, he continued:

I would like, one day, to give you and the Hony Officers some idea of the tact constantly required in dealing with this work. One has to be on guard all the time. There is a class of man in the Army now who gives no end of trouble and some of the Jewish Officers also require very delicate handling.

Leave for Jewish festivals was valued. In his same letter to Ornstien, Green continued:

Finally, I have, officially, to report to you that I have received applications from more than one Jewish soldier in the Eastern Command to get them re-Judaised for Passover as they joined as Christians and want to keep Passover! In each case I have declined. I have pointed out that a Commanding Officer would be sure to think that Jews wanted Judaism when it meant a long furlough and that if they proffer their request to me after the Passover leave has expired, I shall be willing then to entertain it.

On 20 February 1918 a conference of Jewish chaplains and officiating clergymen was held in Birmingham. As the Senior Chaplain on the home front, Lipson took the chair. Papers were read, and the discussions embraced issues of religious observance.<sup>173</sup> On 3 September 1918 a conference of Jewish War Workers, including Adler and Lipson and the Australian Harold Boas, was held in London.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> JC 1/3/1918, pp. 6, 14; 8/3/1918, pp. 7, 14.

<sup>174</sup> JC 6/9/1918, p. 26.

I have noted that whilst on active service abroad many Jewish soldiers made great efforts to attend religious services. Whilst in Britain, however, attendance at services was a perennial issue. On occasion, especially on the High Holydays, services were attended by large numbers of soldiers. However Jewish chaplains frequently reported low attendances at regular religious services, in contrast to Anglicans whose attendance at Sunday church parade was compulsory. Rev. Walter Levin, then an officiating clergyman and later to become a chaplain, noted at the chaplaincy conference that at a particular service only twenty-three out of the one hundred and sixty Jewish soldiers in the garrison attended. Commanding officers often offered premises for Jewish services if requested. This was sometimes abused by Jewish soldiers, who used them for smoking and playing cards, which chaplains feared threatened the continuation of services and brought Judaism into disrepute. The chaplains' conference discussed whether services should be made compulsory, and reached a consensus that they should be, in the interests of the soldiers themselves. Simmons, a minister of the Reform denomination, dissented; Saturday afternoon was the only free time when men were allowed to go out, and in a tense correspondence in April and May 1918 with Chief Rabbi Hertz he said so. In Britain, he wrote, it might have been possible to make services compulsory; abroad, Jewish soldiers were so widely dispersed that it would have been wholly impractical. Services would therefore have to take place on Sunday mornings. Hertz responded that Sunday services must not be regarded as a substitute for Saturday services; Simmons countered that the Sunday services were not, as Hertz had suggested, devoid of religious significance. In the event services did not become compulsory.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> The sources in relation to Simmons are cited in section 9.27.2.

Another issue was the absence of officers from services, upon which soldiers would comment adversely. "The one thing about the services that appears bad to me is that I have never seen any officers attend, although there must be a considerable number of Jewish officers", wrote Private Lelyveld. Jewish chaplains criticised absentee officers for being "conspicuous in their anxiety not to be recognised as Jews, or at least not to be identified with their religious practices". At the chaplains' conference Levin spoke of the lack of support which he had received from Jewish officers: "a want of communal spirit which was in most cases prompted by pure moral cowardice. To disguise his Judaism, the Jewish officer frequently marched with his men to church, or where he did not do lip service to the church he declared himself a fire worshipper."<sup>176</sup>

#### 9.17. The Young Men's Christian Association

As Michael Snape has observed, "Of all the civilian organisations which plunged into army work in 1914-18, none attained the size, prominence or level of organisational efficiency achieved by the YMCA."<sup>177</sup> Instantly identifiable by its famous Red Triangle logo, the YMCA developed an infrastructure of hundreds of centres, some close to the front line. In January 1916 it took a full front page advertisement, illustrated by soldiers queueing at a YMCA hut, in the *Jewish World* inviting donations for YMCA huts.<sup>178</sup> The members of Adler's Central Synagogue in the fashionable West End of London raised the cost of a YMCA hut, and the Jews living around the Mile End Road in the impoverished east end of London of another. Full-page fundraising

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<sup>176</sup> LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/001. Lloyd, *Jews under Fire*, pp.99-101. JC 23/2/1917, p.18; 14/9/17, p 28; 1/3/18, pp. 6, 14; 15/3/1918, p. 10; 22/3/1918, p.8.

<sup>177</sup> Snape, *God and the British Soldier*, pp. 207-215, 221-226 at p. 208; *The Back Parts of War*, pp. 17-98.

<sup>178</sup> JW 26/1/1916, p. 1.

advertisements under Adler's name, similarly illustrated, appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle* in November 1916 and June 1917.<sup>179</sup>

#### 9.18. Conducting Services without a Chaplain

Religious services were conducted for Jewish soldiers in numerous locations throughout Britain. The *Jewish Chronicle* regularly published long lists of the locations and times of services, for the Friday evenings and Saturday mornings and sometimes afternoons of the Sabbath and for festivals, and the *Jewish World* sometimes did so. These listed the officiants, who were chaplains, officiating clergymen, civilians and soldiers of all ranks from officers to privates.<sup>180</sup>

There were never remotely enough Jewish chaplains on any of the Western, Italian, Salonika or Middle Eastern fronts. Jewish chaplains were responsible for and had to cover vast areas far too large for one man. Only rarely did they have any transport. Adler and Barnett when he succeeded him had a car. Simmons, Barnett and the Australian Danglow rode horses, as did Falk in Palestine. Some of the chaplains borrowed a bicycle or a vehicle, and some units lent them a car when it was possible. They had often to "lorry hop", hitching rides on lorries, and to walk long distances. At periods when they were stationed in French towns behind the line, chaplains held services in the synagogue in conjunction with the local Rabbi.

Generally the chaplains had to find locations for services, especially for the High Holydays and Passover. Sometimes for festivals they had to try to arrange several services at different distant locations. They therefore tried to find men who were

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<sup>179</sup> JC 17/11/1916, p. 11; 15/6/1917, p. 9.

<sup>180</sup> BJBH, p. 13 and illustrations pp. 14, 167, 201 (group photograph of Home Service chaplains and officiating clergymen in England in 1917), 242, 266, 299. JC, e.g. 25/5/1917, p. 19; 27/7/1917, p. 14; 14/9/1917, p. 25; 25/1/1918, p. 21; 8/2/1918, p. 17; 1/3/1918, p. 15. JW, e.g. 3/3/1915, p. 22. Illustration 3.



willing and able to conduct services, and to arrange for services to be held. From his first exploratory visit to France in 1915, Adler wherever possible organised officers and men so that they might hold services for themselves. Sometimes groups of men came together spontaneously to hold a service. Doubtless few records of such services were kept or, if kept, survive.

Perhaps the best documented example appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle* on 22 October 1915. Headed *Service on Yom Kippur near the trenches*, it is a letter to Adler from Staff Sergeant J. Canton, RAMC, who was running an advanced dressing station and with the permission of his major held a service in its marquee:

Thanks to your valuable aid, I was quite astonished to find that twenty-three men came down for the service, which far exceeded the number I anticipated getting down to our camp. Below you will find a list of their names ..... and of course, myself who, as requested by you, conducted the service. I remember it was a hot, burning morning, the sun was beating down mercilessly, one could hardly breathe, and yet the poor boys came straggling in by two's and three's, most of them carrying all their 'packs,' rifles, etc., looking hot, dusty and weary, their boots and puttees covered with dust. Many of them had obtained leave from their C.O.'s and came right down from the trenches a distance of three to five miles; not one of them having breakfasted, and all told me they were determined to keep up the Fast. ... I conducted the service, as regulated by you, in the special Prayer Book issued to the Jewish troops for Yom Kippur, at the termination of which they all deemed it a success. I'm afraid I didn't do so 'great' though – being an amateur Chazan for the first time in one's existence is not exactly as easy as it seems. ... All things come to an end, and so did our gathering. As the day was rapidly waning, and many of

the chaps had to get back to the trenches, so we bid each other 'good luck' and 'guten Yomtov,' shook hands all round, and all of us departed our various ways, taking with us memories which, I'm sure, most of us will never forget of a pleasant, though earnest, Yom Kippur service held on 'active service' by British Jews serving in His Majesty's Army.<sup>181</sup>

Adler recorded that this service was held in the Second Army area near Poperinghe. Canton was killed less than a year later, on 14 July 1916. Adler wrote "I shall never forget how he conducted the Yom Kippur service for the local Jewish soldiers last year, and how delighted the men were with him.... The burial service was read by a Jewish soldier who was with him at the time." On 19 October 1916 Adler visited his and other graves at Carnoy, and on 21 January 1918 he went to army headquarters in connection with the consecration of a new memorial to him.<sup>182</sup>

Another service is recorded:

On 3 September [1916] a service was held behind the firing line "somewhere in France" by twenty-one Jewish boys of the Bucks. As no Jewish chaplain was available the service was conducted by Lance Corporal A. Jacobs assisted by Private M. Jacobs. The service concluded with "God Save the King".<sup>183</sup>

In his report in October 1916 to the Chief Rabbi on the services held on the High Holydays, Adler wrote that in addition to those conducted by chaplains other services were conducted in numerous locations by Jewish officers or men.<sup>184</sup> In September

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<sup>181</sup> JC 22/10/1915, p. 14. JW 21/7/1915, p. 12 (photo); 20/10/1915, p. 18.

<sup>182</sup> BJBH, p. 42. Adler Diary. JC 18/8/1916, p. 12; 25/8/1916, p. 13; 15/9/1916, p. 11. JW 23/8/1916, pp. 11 (photo), 15; 20/9/1916, p. 14.

<sup>183</sup> JC 15/9/1916, p. 12. JW 13/9/1916, p. 14.

<sup>184</sup> LMA, ACC/2805/04/05/008.

1918 the *Jewish Chronicle* reported that Major Schonfield, who was now in camp, conducted services on both days of Rosh Hashanah for the Corps of Salonika Jews, a shofar was provided, and one of the buglers proved himself to be an expert Baal Tokeah.<sup>185</sup> Describing a service on Yom Kippur in 1918, Sapper I. Rosenthal of the Royal Engineers Signallers wrote that he and others set out at half past seven in a lorry and began the service at half past ten. As they could not find an unoccupied building anywhere they held the service in a field. Numbering about twenty, the prayers were read by an officer in the Machine Gun Corps and a comrade in the kilted uniform of the Black Watch. The rendering of the service caused much wonderment to passers-by. At the close they marched about seven kilometres to an inn where they broke their fast on eggs and potatoes followed by tinned fruit.<sup>186</sup>

It was not only Jewish chaplains who could not be everywhere. On occasion Anglican officers led religious services in the absence of commissioned chaplains.<sup>187</sup>

### 9.19. Making Do

Throughout the war Jewish soldiers complained of the lack of Jewish chaplains, especially when compared with the religious support given to Christian comrades. As Rev. Levin wrote to the *Jewish Chronicle*: “Our Jew soldiers see what is being done for their Christian comrades; ought we to do less for them?” In Britain too ministers could be scarce. Private Ludski, who spent fifteen months at Beckett’s Park Hospital in Leeds, where there were over sixty Jewish patients, complained that none

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<sup>185</sup> JC 20/9/1918, p. 13.

<sup>186</sup> JC 11/10/1918, p. 18.

<sup>187</sup> Snape, *God and the British Soldier*, pp. 148-149.

received a single visit from a Jewish minister; and other patients and lady visitors reported similarly.<sup>188</sup>

Soldiers had to manage to observe their Judaism as best they might. There is a poignant letter in May 1915 from an unnamed Jewish soldier at the front:

.... About 10. o'clock we reached our destination, fortunately without a single casualty, although we had been under fire part of the way up, and my platoon has been in the dug-outs as reserve to the firing line, and about 100 yards to the rear of it. This pleased me greatly; it seems more fitting on this night of nights to be here at rest than to be up there firing perhaps at someone who is thinking much as I am – who knows? As soon as we got settled in this dug-out I managed to get a fire going and made some cocoa, this with a biscuit, making my 'Seder Night', and I said the Blessing for Wine over it, and drank a toast to those at home in response to the toast they will certainly drink to me tonight. So I finished my little Seder and then read some of the Psalms from my soldier's prayer-book. We are eleven in this dug-out, and afterwards I talked to the boys of the Passover, seeing in it all wonders I've never seen before, and the deeper significance of it came home to me. They are fine boys, these, gentlemen all, who would share their last crumb with me if I wanted it, and they just sat in silence, listening carefully to all I said, and when I had finished dear old Dick said: 'It's alright, old man, we understand.' Just that and no more. Now they are all asleep, and I write this by candle light to the accompaniment of the 'crack, crack' as the bullets hit the bank overhead

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<sup>188</sup> Lloyd, *Jews under Fire*, pp.101-102. JC 3/5/1918, p. 24; 6/12/1918, p. 23.

.... Good night and good Yomtov all, my dear ones, my thoughts are with you all.<sup>189</sup>

In January 1916 Private Jack Baker RAMC wrote that he always attends the weekly service at the Synagogue in Aldershot. When he reads his evening prayers, his non-Jewish chums cluster round him, and all of them read the beautiful night prayer before lights out.<sup>190</sup> In March 1916 Private Leonard Baronowitsch of the 5<sup>th</sup> Worcestershire Regiment wrote to Rev. A. Plaskow:

..... There are three other Jewish lads in our dug-out, and our Christian pals gave it the nickname of the 'Kosher House'. I didn't remain long in the Kosher House before I was wounded, and I think you will be able to find the house Kosher still with a Mezuzah which I fixed on the outside.<sup>191</sup>

## 9.20. Funerals

Designating Jewish graves was an issue from the outset. Sometimes a standard Cross was erected over a Jewish grave. Sometimes the unit to which a deceased Jewish soldier belonged would make its own pattern of the Shield of David or would erect a plain board rather than a Cross. In June 1915 Adler obtained the approval of the Graves' Registration Commission at the front for every Cross which had been erected over a Jewish grave to be replaced, initially by a plain board bearing the man's name and ultimately by "a memorial of the design which you have submitted". This was a standard Magen David erected over all Jewish graves, both English and German, and a wooden Magen David inscribed with the word *Shalom* erected over Jewish graves in cemeteries including in Rouen, Le Treport and Paris Plage. Initially

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<sup>189</sup> JW 5/5/1915, p. 19.

<sup>190</sup> JW 12/1/1916, p. 22.

<sup>191</sup> JW 15/3/1916 p. 18.

the first two of these memorials were carved by Adler's orderly, Private R. Friedlander, and others by a Christian staff-sergeant of the Royal Engineers who offered his services for the purpose, saying "there is nothing too much I would do for any soldier of any religion who has given his life for his King and Country." By August 1915 the erection of Magen David memorials over the graves of Jewish soldiers which Adler had arranged was being rapidly carried out, and several of the graves were named, including that of Lieutenant Frank A. De Pass, V.C, the first Jewish soldier in the war to win the Victoria Cross. By 1916 the Graves Registration Commission was erecting Jewish memorials over Jewish graves and sending Adler photographs for transmission to relatives. The issue was a constant cause of concern to Adler, and led on occasion to reburials.<sup>192</sup>

The first funeral which Adler conducted, he wrote, was that of a French Jewish soldier who was a Zouave from Algiers. It took place in Rouen, and Adler officiated in the absence of the local Rabbi who was on active service near Verdun as a chaplain and stretcher bearer. The second was in May 1915, when Adler arranged for a German prisoner, a young law student, who had died to be buried in a row allotted for Jews in a cemetery at Le Treport and conducted his funeral. In the cemetery he discovered the grave of a young British Jewish soldier from London whom he had met at a service a month before and who had been killed and buried under a Cross. At his request the senior medical officer of the district gave permission for the soldier to be disinterred, which was very unusual, and he was reburied alongside the German soldier. The same Royal Engineers staff-sergeant made a Magen David for

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<sup>192</sup> BJBH, pp.39-40, 43-44. *Report of Work at the Front from Jan. to June 1916*. Snape, *God and the British Soldier*, pp. 151, 263 n. 73. JC 2/4/1915, p. 12; 18/6/1915, p. 19; 27/8/1915, p.14; 22/10/1915, p.14. JW 25/8/1915, p. 22.

the British soldier, but for the German was willing only to set up a simple board with an inscription. Messages asking chaplains to officiate at funerals often led to their making long journeys; Adler recorded instances of four and six hour journeys, and of travelling one hundred and sixty miles there and back on Wednesday 18 August 1915 to officiate at the funeral of Captain E. C. Simon of the 2-5<sup>th</sup> Lancashire Fusiliers.<sup>193</sup>

The funeral service was included in the pocket prayer book issued to Jewish soldiers. The chances of any Jewish chaplain being able to reach the location of a Jewish funeral on the western front were small. So, as with Staff Sergeant Canton<sup>194</sup>, a Jewish funeral was sometimes conducted by another Jewish soldier. Reporting on the arrangements which Adler had made with the military authorities for the burial of Jewish soldiers, the *Jewish Chronicle* reported that “The Chaplain desires it be known that in every case where there is no local Rabbi, a Jewish soldier had been appointed to conduct the burial service”.<sup>195</sup> What this meant is not entirely clear, as nobody could guarantee the availability of a Jewish soldier at all, let alone one willing and able to perform this task. Perhaps it referred to arrangements such as that about which Lieutenant Sydney Frankenburg of the 1/8<sup>th</sup> Manchester Regiment wrote in June 1915 to his wife:

I went over to GHQ to a Jewish service, the Chief Rabbi was there .... I am to be appointed a sort of Jewish chaplain, that is they have approached me to

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<sup>193</sup> BJBH, p. 43. LMA, ACC/ 2805/04/04/001. JM, file 2011.74. JC 27/8/1915, p.14. JW 25/8/1915, p. 22.

<sup>194</sup> Section 9.18.

<sup>195</sup> JC 18/6/1915, p. 19.

read the burial service over such Jewish soldiers who die in the hospitals and field ambulances in this area.<sup>196</sup>

June 1915 was when the Chief Rabbi made his visit to France, so Adler must have taken advantage of his presence and authority to formalise burial procedures with the army.

Adler arranged for a short form of the Jewish Burial Service in English to be printed and widely distributed among Christian chaplains to enable them to conduct a Jewish Burial Service in English for Jewish soldiers.<sup>197</sup> Many chaplains themselves made the rough form of the Shield of David in order to mark a Jewish grave. One officer later told Adler that as he lay seriously wounded in a casualty clearing station the padre had sought to comfort him by telling him with the best intention in the world that if he died the Jewish Service would be read over his body if Adler was not within reach.<sup>198</sup>

Private Samuel Marks, RAMC wrote that on the fifth day of the war he was out in France doing his "little bit". He met three Jews, and wrote of the third:

The next Jew I met in our hospital in Belgium. That was not a happy meeting, for he was sorely wounded and dying. He was too weak to speak. I officiated at his funeral, reading the burial service from the Prayer Book issued to Jewish soldiers on active service. That event was to me the most awesome and saddening experience of all my life. For there was a Jew dead in the

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<sup>196</sup> BJBH, pp.44-45. Snape, *God and the British Soldier*, pp. 151, 263 n. 74.

<sup>197</sup> This practice was followed amongst Australian chaplains in the Second World War: Gladwin, *Captains of the Soul*, p. 125.

<sup>198</sup> BJBH, pp.44-45.



midst of strangers, although of the same army, and only one other Jew to see him on the way to solve the greatest of mysteries.<sup>199</sup>

In May 1915 Private Charles Rosenthal of the 4<sup>th</sup> London Regiment was taken, seriously wounded, to Rouen, where he died. Privates J. Sidney and R. Simmons, RAMC performed Tahara in the hospital, assisted by the local beadle, Mr Jacobson. The funeral took place in the military cemetery of St. Seven, in a section that had been consecrated by Adler in February 1915. The Chief Rabbi of Rouen, M. Nathan Levy, who had just returned from the front, where he had been serving since September as chaplain to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army Corps, officiated. Adler arrived in Rouen the following day, and visited the grave.<sup>200</sup> On 15 May 1915 Private Israel Jackson of the 7<sup>th</sup> Durham Light Infantry was killed. He was buried by four other Jewish men of the same battalion, who were all his school fellows from Sunderland.<sup>201</sup>

Having conducted a religious service in England in December 1914 for men of his 17<sup>th</sup> (County of London) Battalion, the London Regiment (Poplar and Stepney Rifles), Lieutenant Arthur Baraf Walters, the Jewish officer in the regiment, conducted, together with Rifleman Abraham Louis Strauss, a Jewish funeral for Sergeant Morris Gordon, who was killed on 16 May 1915. One of the bearers was Rifleman M. Davis of the 12<sup>th</sup> Platoon, who wrote to Gordon's parents of the continual boom of guns in the distance. Rifleman Strauss was himself killed on 23 May 1915 by a sniper, and the letter which he had written to the mother of Sergeant Morris was found on him. Lieutenant Walters also conducted other Jewish funerals.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> JC 7/5/1915, p. 20. JW 5/5/1915, p. 18.

<sup>200</sup> JW 19/5/1915, p. 17.

<sup>201</sup> JW 2/6/1915, p. 15.

<sup>202</sup> Harold Pollins, *The Poplar boy who became an army major in The Cable*, issue 28, 2016, pp. 16-21. JW 26/5/1915, p. 16; 9/6/1915, p. 20.

On 13 August 1915 Mr Leopold Frank of 49 Westbourne Terrace, Hyde Park in London wrote to Chief Rabbi Hertz about the shortage of Jewish Chaplains (of whom there were then only two, Adler and Simmons, on the Western front):

I would like to give you a little instance how considerate Christian Clergymen are towards our people. The Chaplain of the 19<sup>th</sup> London came to my son [Captain. J. L. Frank] some time ago and told him that a wounded Jewish soldier had died, and asked my boy if he would bury him. My son took an escort of 20 men and had the body carried to the Guards' Cemetery at Givenchy, but whilst reading the Jewish Burial Service, the Germans shelled the Cemetery. ....<sup>203</sup>

In June 1915 the *Jewish Chronicle* and the *Jewish World* reported the death of a soldier called Reginald (Reggie) Lehmann. Both published a poignant letter written to his mother by the Church of England chaplain attached to 1/6 Seaforths describing how after initial hesitation he and the Presbyterian chaplain had conducted her son's funeral from the burial service in his Jewish prayer book. The *Jewish Chronicle* entitled its report "Christian Chaplain's Noble Act", and concluded:

Who, reading this fine communication Christian in the very best sense of the word, religious in the truest meaning of the term, will not feel the force of the prophet's explanation: 'Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?' G.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/001. Rifleman Lionel Goldston, the son of Rev. Nehemiah Goldston (later to become a chaplain: section 9. 27.12.), had been killed on 30 May 1915.

<sup>204</sup> JC 25/6/1915, pp. 7, 16-17. JW 14/10/1914, p. 13; 23/6/1915, pp. 5, 9-10, 15-17; 30/6/1915, p. 19.

In July 1915 the *Jewish Chronicle* published (opposite a tribute to Reginald Lehmann) a letter from Sergeant Major V. Rathbone of the King Edward's Horse to his brother, Mr. M. Rathbone:

I was up and down the trenches for twenty-four hours, with one hour's rest. We captured a German officer, Lieut. Max Seller, of a Bavarian Cavalry Regiment. He and about fifty men were attacking us with hand bombs and the officer was bayoneted on the parapet. I helped to bury him with our own casualties. He was a Jew so I had the services altered by the Chaplain. Possibly his people might be glad to know, and if you asked the *Jewish Chronicle* and *Jewish World* to mention it they might learn of it. He was a plucky chap and our fellows could not help expressing admiration of his effort to bomb us.<sup>205</sup>

Poignant, too, were the circumstances of the death of Rifleman Aubrey Fraser. The *Jewish Chronicle* in July 1916 reported it thus:<sup>206</sup>

The Late Rifleman Aubrey Frazer [*sic*].

Touching letter from a German Rabbiner.

Rifleman Aubrey Fraser (the second son of Mr I. Fraser, member of the Board of Management of the St. John's Wood Synagogue, and Mrs Fraser) who was

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<sup>205</sup> JC 2/7/1915, p. 13, cited by Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, pp. 158-9, 295 n. 103. Lieutenant Seller was later buried in the British Hyde Park Corner (Royal Berks) Cemetery outside Ploegsteert near Ypres. A century later, in 2016, through the efforts of a German historian, Robin Schäfer, a Magen David was carved into his headstone: JC 13/10/2017, p. 42. On a group visit in April 2017 I discovered this headstone, an Ajax tribute was performed and the current British Jewish Chaplain, Rabbi Major Reuben Livingstone, recited the Memorial Prayer. Illustration 4.

<sup>206</sup> JC 28/7/1916, p. 19.

reported wounded and missing in our last issue, died from the effects of his wounds on July 9<sup>th</sup>.

Mr Fraser has received the following letter, in German, from Rabbi Dr Ludwig Rosenthal, of Cologne.

Dear Sir, - It is my sad duty to inform you that your son Aubrey, of the London Rifle Brigade, who was brought here severely wounded and taken to the hospital, succumbed to his wounds on the 9<sup>th</sup> July. I was with him at the time of his death, 2 a.m., and the last conscious words of your dying son were of his father and mother. A religious service was held in the hospital, after which he was interred in the Jewish cemetery. Full military honours were accorded him. May God comfort you and endow you with strength to submit to the words recited by me at the burial: 'The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord.'

Warm tributes followed from Revs. E. Levene and H.L. Price, both of whom had known Aubrey Fraser well. They wrote that he was aged eighteen and had served in France for about three months. The *Jewish World* praised the letter to Fraser's parents as "light in the gloom".<sup>207</sup>

In September 1918 Rev. David Hirsch arranged the funeral of Private B. Samuels of the Northumberland Fusiliers. Unable to conduct the funeral personally, he arranged for Private S. Jacobson of the same regiment to do so and for a Magen David to be erected over the grave. Private Jacobson wrote to Private Samuels' father

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<sup>207</sup> JW 26/7/1916 p. 4; 2/8/1916 pp. 9, 15.

mentioning that the Church of England chaplain had afforded him every facility to carry out the funeral.<sup>208</sup>

In September 1916 the *Jewish Chronicle* published an article by the Vice Chairman of the JWSC, Major Lionel de Rothschild MP, on the work of the JWSC:

I cannot finish without remarking how very kind the clergy of other denominations have been, and the great assistance which has been rendered by one and all to the Jewish chaplains in France. Christian chaplains possess the Jewish Prayer Books, which have been issued to every Jew in the British Army, and when no Jewish chaplain has been available they have often rendered comfort from these books to the dying and have performed the last rites to those of the Jewish Faith who have fallen.<sup>209</sup>

Jewish chaplains could be called upon to conduct funerals of non-Jews if no other chaplain was available. In June 1917 Australian Jewish chaplain David Freedman recorded:

To Pont Nieppe. Place bombarded. Casualties in 42nd Battalion. Fires burning in village. Was called on by Sergeant of 42nd Battalion, who said that two Christian soldiers were awaiting burial. Some trouble in getting two chaplains to go; was sent to me by Brigade to know if I would take the funerals. Consented to go; buried the men, with the approval of the Colonel of the 42nd Battalion.<sup>210</sup>

Anything could happen. The *Jewish Chronicle* reported:

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<sup>208</sup> JC 13/9/1918, p. 16.

<sup>209</sup> JC 15/9/1916, p. 13.

<sup>210</sup> Boas, pp.125, 129.

Catholic priest reads Jewish prayer. A Hungarian Catholic priest relates that on finding in the field a dying Jewish soldier he immediately assumed the duty of a Jewish chaplain and recited a Hebrew prayer.<sup>211</sup>

### 9.21. A Case Study of Dealing with a Jewish Death

Born in around 1892 in Britain to parents who arrived that year from Nikolayev in Russia and one of nine children, Samuel Bishop was trained in his father's trade as a tailor. In 1913, at the age of twenty, he and a cousin emigrated to Australia, where he worked as a farm labourer. On 10 September 1914, at the age of about twenty-two, he joined the Australian Imperial Force and was placed in the 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion with service number 1187. He volunteered very early in the war, as the date and his low service number attest. If he was having difficulty making a hard living he may have done so for a wage and to see something more of the world, and perhaps for adventure. He enlisted as Church of England, perhaps consciously to deflect prejudice and perhaps because everybody may have been automatically so recorded.

Bishop went to the Dardanelles, where on 9 May 1915 he was wounded. He was sent on a hospital ship to Alexandria. On 1 July 1915 he rejoined his battalion, which transferred to France. Bishop's regiment served in the campaigns on the Somme and at Passchendale. On 23 August 1918 Bishop was wounded in both thighs, his buttock and his left arm and ear, and five days later at the age of twenty-six he died of his wounds. He was buried at the Daours Communal Cemetery Extension in Daours in Picardie in France. On 9 September 1918 British Jewish Chaplain Rev. H.L. Price wrote from 41 CCS to his father:

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<sup>211</sup> JC 22/1/1915, p. 18. Report of same incident in JW 20/1/1915, p. 21.

Dear Mr Bishop

Accept my heartfelt sympathy in the heavy blow that has befallen you & I pray that you may receive Divine Consolation.

Re your letter to Rev Danglow I was with your poor boy when he died. He passed peacefully away without suffering. Although I sat with him for some considerable time he did not recover consciousness. I administered the last rites as far as possible under conditions out here.

With respect to his effects please write to D. A.G. (Effects) 3<sup>rd</sup> Echelon G.H.Q. France. All belongings are sent to the above & application must be made direct.

With renewed sympathy & best wishes

Yours sincerely

Harris L. Price Jewish Chaplain

Ten days later, on 19 September 1918, Church of England Chaplain Rev. J.R.

Thurlow C.F. wrote to Bishop's father from 53 CCS:

Dear Sir,

Please forgive delay in answering your letter. I am writing for the matron, as she is much occupied. Pte. S. Bishop, No. 1187, is confirmed as wounded by a shell in the thighs and buttock, and two other smaller wounds.

Your son was of the Jewish Faith, was he not? We have not now a Jewish Chaplain attached to us, but I remember that one came to see his patients,

and when your son died he came over to take the service. He was an Australian.

The Map Refer. of the Cemetery, in which your boy lies is 62d N6a 4.2. It is a British extension of a French Communal Cemetery.

Unfortunately, I cannot refer your letter to that Chaplain as we have moved up many miles since that date.

I am sorry this is such an unsatisfactory letter. The personal effects will be forwarded to you through the official channels.

With sincere sympathy,

Yours faithfully

F.R. Thurlow C.F. C. of E.

The Jewish Chaplain referred to in Rev. Thurlow's letter was plainly the Australian Rev. Jacob (Jack) Danglow. He had visited Bishop at the casualty clearing station and would have written to his parents, which is why Rev. Price referred to the father's letter to him. Danglow conducted Bishop's funeral. Only a few weeks after the funeral, on 7 October 1918, a letter was written on behalf of the Senior British Jewish Chaplain, Arthur Barnett, from No. 7 CCS by Corporal (as he now was) Friedlander, who had served as the clerk to Adler and continued to do so for Barnett:

Dear Sir

In giving instructions for a Jewish memorial to be erected over the grave of your late son Pte. S. Bishop, the question of his religion has arisen.



Would you be good enough to fill up the enclosed form and return to me at your earliest convenience.

Yours in all sympathy

Cpl. D.(?) Friedlander for [*as a date stamp*] Senior Jewish Chaplain. 7 Oct 1918.

At some stage Bishop's parents were sent from the London Headquarters of the Australian Imperial Force a photograph of the grave with a wooden marker in the shape of a Magen David and with the Hebrew word Shalom, erected amidst a field of crosses in the cemetery. Information was gathered by the Australian authorities in 1927, and Bishop was commemorated on the Roll of Honour of Australia in the Memorial War Museum.

This sequence of letters is a case study in the workings of Jewish chaplaincy in dealing with a death. Australian Jewish Chaplain Rev. Jacob Danglow visited patients in the casualty clearing station. As Bishop was Australian Danglow came to conduct his funeral, and wrote to his parents to inform them. Had he not been available British Jewish Chaplain Rev. Harris Price would undoubtedly have done so. Then, in the absence of a Jewish Chaplain, a Christian Chaplain replied to the letter from the father to the casualty clearing station which had communicated with him, reporting that the funeral had taken place and giving the cemetery details. Quite soon afterwards the British Senior Jewish Chaplain, Barnett, through the clerk who conducted much of his voluminous correspondence, checked that a Jewish memorial was appropriate. The grave was marked by a Magen David and the word Shalom, and at some stage a photograph of the grave with its Magen David and Shalom, set amidst a field of crosses, was sent to the parents. Inevitably amidst all of the

vicissitudes of war the system for dealing with the death of a Jewish soldier did not always work as it should have done. But in the case of Samuel Bishop, towards the end of the war and with the operational experience which had by then assimilated, it did.<sup>212</sup>

## 9.22. Australian Jewish Chaplaincy

### 9.22.1. Introduction

Australian Jewish chaplaincy is significant, both in its own right and for its integration into and perspective on British Jewish chaplaincy, to which it became to some extent subordinated. Conscription was not introduced in Australia, so everybody who served did so voluntarily.<sup>213</sup> Chanukah military services took place in Australia in 1914, conducted by Chaplains Rev. Jacob Danglow in Melbourne and Rabbi Francis Cohen in Sydney. Attending the service in Melbourne was Colonel John Monash, commanding the 4<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Brigade.<sup>214</sup> Over 1,500 Jews from Australia, and some 150 from New Zealand, were to serve in the First World War.<sup>215</sup> From England Rev. Adler sent a message to “my Jewish comrades from Australia and New Zealand” in Egypt. “... I had hoped to welcome you in person in England, as I have been privileged to do with our Canadian brethren ...”.<sup>216</sup>

Rev. I. A. Bernstein was a chaplain to the New Zealand forces. In the summer of 1915 he was released by his congregation in Christchurch and went to Sydney, where he offered his services as a chaplain to the Jewish members of the Expeditionary Force. His offer was accepted.<sup>217</sup> Yet he is not referred to anywhere

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<sup>212</sup> Documents in the possession of descendants of Bishop.

<sup>213</sup> BJBH, p. 21.

<sup>214</sup> JW 27/1/1915, p. 18.

<sup>215</sup> Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs*, pp. 142-144.

<sup>216</sup> JW 6/1/1915, p. 19.

<sup>217</sup> JC 2/7/1915, p. 13.

that I have discovered, so what happened to him afterwards is obscure. No Jewish chaplains were appointed for service abroad with the New Zealand, Indian, Canadian or Newfoundland troops. Within Canada Rabbi Herman Abramovitz served as a chaplain. Two South African Jewish chaplains were appointed.

Australian and New Zealand troops travelled to Egypt for the Gallipoli campaign. The first Australian Jewish Chaplain with the AIF, who served at Gallipoli, in the Middle East and on the western front, was Rev. David Isaac Freedman. He became over time the “Anzac” chaplain to the New Zealand as well as the Australian troops. He was succeeded on the western front by Rev. Jacob (Jack) Danglow. The interregnum of some seven months between them was filled by the English chaplain Rev. David Hirsch. The work of Lieutenant Harold Boas, representing the Australian YMCA, also formed a part of Australian Jewish chaplaincy. When British Jewish chaplains were in Australian areas they rendered chaplaincy services.

For most of the war there was considerable confusion whether British Principal Chaplains possessed any authority over Australian chaplains; only in October 1918 was it decided that they did not.<sup>218</sup> Jewish soldiers from abroad nominally came under the British chaplaincy whilst serving with the British Expeditionary Force. When the Australian Corps arrived on the western front the Australian Jewish chaplaincy came effectively under the control of the British Jewish chaplaincy. After Passover 1917 this ended and it was placed under the Senior Chaplain for Other Protestant Denominations (colloquially OPD or “other poor devils”) of the AIF,

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<sup>218</sup> Gladwin, *Captains of the Soul*, p. 87.

Chaplain the Rev. F.J. Miles, DSO, OBE, CF, who, Boas wrote, maintained excellent relationships with the Jewish chaplains.<sup>219</sup>

#### 9.22.2. Rev. David Isaac Freedman (17 April 1874 – 24 June 1939)

Born in Budapest in Hungary and educated in England at Jews' College and University College London, Rev. (later Rabbi) David Isaac Freedman travelled in 1897 to Australia to become the minister in Perth. Intensely patriotic, he gave a farewell in 1900 to the first Jewish officer, Samuel Harris, to depart for the Anglo-Boer War.<sup>220</sup> On 1 October 1915 Freedman was appointed Jewish chaplain to the AIF.<sup>221</sup> With the assistance of the Senior Rabbi of the Jewish Community of Australia, Rabbi Dr. Abrahams of Melbourne, he obtained permission from the Australian military authorities to exchange a Magen David badge for the conventional chaplaincy Maltese Cross. His experiences similar to Adler's, he was to write from the Dardanelles that:

The Magen David badges I am wearing on my tunic and cap are answering their purpose splendidly. In many instances I have been stopped by soldiers to whom I was a perfect stranger who were attracted by the badge and who introduced themselves to me as Jews. One of them was good enough to say it was like a ray of sunshine to him.<sup>222</sup>

Enlisting on 6 October 1915 at the age of forty-one for continuous service, Freedman left Melbourne on 27 October 1915 on *HMAS Ulysses*. Passing through Cairo en route to the Dardanelles, he wrote for advice to Adler, whom he knew from his Jews'

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<sup>219</sup> Boas, pp. 90-92.

<sup>220</sup> Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs*, p.35.

<sup>221</sup> Apple, *The Jewish military chaplaincy in Australia*, p. 239.

<sup>222</sup> Letter in the *Jewish Herald* 10/3/1916, in Joe Lederman, *A tale of two ANZAC rabbis*, in a Sydney magazine, 2003.

College days, who replied. Adler had already raised the issues of the absence of a Jewish chaplain in the Dardanelles and the need to arrange for Jewish graves there to be appropriately marked.<sup>223</sup> When Adler heard from Freedman he asked the Australian High Commission in London to authorise Freedman to minister to British as well as Anzac troops, to which the High Commission assented.<sup>224</sup>

Attached to the Second Division headquarters, Freedman landed at Gallipoli on 9 December 1915. He spent several “rippingly rough times” there and lived on sardines and biscuits. He did voluntary sentry duty at night, later writing that he had preferred walking to sleeping. He sought out Jewish soldiers and conducted services, one of which was attended by men of the Zion Mule Corps. The Gallipoli evacuation was commencing, and on 16 December Freedman was evacuated and transferred to Mudros, the harbour on the island of Lemnos where Allied troops had assembled. There he located Anzac and British Jewish soldiers, met men of the Zion Mule Corps, visited the six hospitals and the military cemetery which had been established and conducted Sabbath services.

On 8 January 1916 Freedman arrived in Egypt. On 10 February the British War Office appointed him chaplain to all of the men of the Jewish Faith serving in the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. With the assent of the Australian High Commission in London and after correspondence with the United Synagogue, it empowered him to officiate to British as well as Colonial forces.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Lieutenant Spielmann, the son of communal leader Sir Isidore Spielmann, had been killed there and his grave had initially been marked with a Cross, giving rise to anxious correspondence with his father.

<sup>224</sup> JW 1/12/1915, p. 10.

<sup>225</sup> JM, file 2011.74.

Freedman's work covered three army corps in Egypt and the Canal Zone. Basing himself in Ismailia, for six months he travelled widely between there and Alexandria, Tel-el-Kebir, Moascar and Cairo, by many means including horse and truck and, in the desert, by camel and on foot. He visited units, located Jewish soldiers, conducted services, visited the numerous hospitals and the military cemeteries in Alexandria and Cairo, attempted to secure the erection of the Star of David on Jewish graves and visited Jewish prisoners of war in the "concentration camp". Freedman made it his policy, then and throughout his service, to write to the family of every Jewish soldier whom he met. In Alexandria the Jewish Soldiers Recreation Club provided refreshments for the soldiers after each soldiers' service, and similar post-service hospitality was provided in Cairo. Men sometimes walked long distances to services; on 1 April four men walked ten miles each way with their equipment and rifles to attend a service in the line of one of the British units. The military authorities were always supportive, providing a tent or hut for services, often with a sentry with a fixed bayonet outside, with his audible measured tread up and down, until Freedman told them that this was not necessary. Prayer books were in short supply; the Chief Rabbi and Lipson had written to Freedman to say that consignments had been sent out to Alexandria for him.<sup>226</sup> However it seemed that they had been lost, perhaps, Freedman surmised, on a ship which had gone down. Freedman arranged with the military authorities and the Jewish communities for Jewish soldiers to be granted leave and to receive hospitality for Passover of 1916 in Alexandria, Cairo and Port Said, including requesting free railway passes as some of the men would not be able to pay the fares, and made similar arrangements for

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<sup>226</sup> LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/006.

Jewish soldiers in Salonika. He conducted services on the first days of Passover in Alexandria and the last days in Cairo.

In Egypt Freedman took the opportunity, not available to him in Britain or Australia, to obtain Semicha from a Rabbi. In Cairo the Jewish community were so impressed by this friendly little Rabbi in the uniform of a British officer that they gave him a superb miniature Sefer Torah in an eastern style flat bottomed wooden case “to take into battle”. Freedman used it for the first time on the following Shabbat Mincha service in a spot in the desert not far from where the Children of Israel had encamped after crossing the Red Sea; for the boys to be “called up” to read it and to recite the blessings gave them immense pleasure. Later he used it in England.<sup>227</sup>

Freedman left Egypt in June 1916 with the last infantry units to go to Britain and thence to France. There, with the consent of the Australian military authorities, he placed himself under the directions of Adler as the Senior British Jewish Chaplain. In the opinion of a future Senior Rabbi to the Australian Defence Force, Rabbi Raymond Apple, this was virtually automatic at a time when Australia viewed itself as very much a colony of the mother country.<sup>228</sup> In his diary Adler recorded and numbered the arrival of each new chaplain. On Wednesday 5 July 1916 he recorded the arrival of Rev. D. I Freedman, CF, Anzac Corps, from Egypt, as the fourth Jewish chaplain, after himself, Simmons and Barnett; when Rev. L. Morris arrived in September 1916, Adler numbered him as the fifth chaplain. From his diary Adler plainly regarded Freedman as under his authority in the same way as the British

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<sup>227</sup> Boas, pp.110 -118. Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, p. 86. Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs*, pp. 91-102 and plate 16. Freedman's reports to the Principal Chaplain of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (forwarded by the War Office to the United Synagogue) and to the Visitation Committee and correspondence in JM, file 2011.74. JC 31/3/1916, p. 14.

<sup>228</sup> In conversation with me on 1/1/2015.

Jewish chaplains. Freedman took over part of the line on the Somme in the forward area, including many non-Australian units.<sup>229</sup>

Freedman was posted to Etaples with the 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Division. On 17 July 1916 Adler went there to meet with him. His arrival in France coincided with the big forward movement by the British forces. The hospitals were full of wounded and in nine weeks he paid 258 visits to hospitals. He sent weekly reports about patients in hospital to Adler and regular lists of Jewish casualties to Lipson in London. He conducted services at hospitals and elsewhere, and New Year services. Throughout the rest of 1916 he travelled widely, visiting units, hospitals, dressing stations and casualty clearing stations. At one point his billet was shattered by shelling during his absence.<sup>230</sup> He wrote:

Each week I have held a Service – prayers in Hebrew and English – our meeting place is crowded out with men standing in the corridors .... I stood watching a whole convoy of wounded brought in. Strict silence was observed. No one spoke except the sergeant in charge. I heard no regrets from our wounded men, not even from those who were desperately hurt and had their whole limbs shattered.<sup>231</sup>

In December 1916 and February 1917 Adler recorded having met with Freedman at Becordel. In February 1917 Freedman saw several senior Australian officers on the subject of leave for Passover for Anzac Jewish soldiers, and all were supportive. He went to Paris and made arrangements with the leadership of the Jewish community for invitations to be extended to every Anzac soldier to celebrate Passover there in a

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<sup>229</sup> JC 7/7/1916, p. 18.

<sup>230</sup> Boas, pp. 118-125. Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs*, p. 113.

<sup>231</sup> Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, p. 86.



private home. On his return he reported these arrangements to Corps Headquarters and was authorised to circularise all Anzac Jewish troops about them.<sup>232</sup>

This he did, in an "Important Notice" from "Rev. D. I. Freedman Jewish Chaplain Anzac Corps" issued on 19 February 1917 from "France c/o 7<sup>th</sup> Australian Field Ambulance In the Field" to "Officers, N.C.O's & men of the Jewish Faith in the A. I. F". It stated that in response to Freedman's application Lieutenant-General Sir William Birdwood would do all in his power to help the Jewish Soldiers in Anzac celebrate the Feast of Passover and that if the tactical situation at the time permitted three days leave would be granted on 6, 7 and 8 April in Paris, where the heads of the Jewish Community had given Freedman to understand that they would offer our boys a cordial welcome and would afford them facilities for observing the seder in private homes. Each officer and soldier should inform Freedman at the earliest possible moment of his intention to avail himself of the privilege so that satisfactory arrangements might be made for him.

On 2 March 1917 Freedman wrote, on his printed letterhead of "Rev. D. I. Freedman, Jewish Chaplain, Anzac Corps, British Expeditionary Force, France, ....1916", to Chief Rabbi Hertz in London. Enclosing a copy of his circular about Passover leave for the Anzacs, he praised the support of the major-generals of all of the Australian Divisions and of Lieutenant-General Sir William Birdwood. "Orders are already out that our men are to have five days leave - three clear days in Paris - a day to go & a day to return. .... A vast amount of detail has still to be attended to & I am just now very busy with it." He added, obliquely: "I should mention that at the present moment correspondence is proceeding between Mr Adler & myself on this subject but about

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<sup>232</sup> Boas, pp. 125-126.

which, at this stage, I shall say nothing at all.” The Chief Rabbi replied on 12 March. “I am also very glad to hear that your efforts on behalf of the Anzacs to procure for them facilities to celebrate the Passover have been so well received by the authorities, and that arrangements have been made for them in Paris.”<sup>233</sup>

Boas summarised: “At this juncture the Rev. M. Adler, the Senior Jewish Chaplain of the British Forces, intervened, strongly opposing the leave being given, and the whole scheme was cancelled.”<sup>234</sup> About this incident Adler wrote that there was only one matter upon which he and Chaplain Freedman did not agree. Without consulting him Freedman had arranged for the Australian Jewish soldiers to go to Paris to observe Passover in 1917. When he learned this Adler pointed out to Freedman, who was then living a few miles away, that he regretted that he could not see any reason why any distinction should be made as to the facilities for Passover between Jewish soldiers from one part of the world or another. Adler could not agree to what Freedman had done as it would lead to very serious complaints on the part of the other troops who had also come from beyond the seas. Adler had already received a number of letters from men who had come from South America, South Africa and other parts asking why the same arrangements could not be made for them as for the Australians.

As they could not see each other’s point of view Adler suggested to Freedman, who approved, that they submit the difficulty to the GOC of the AIF, Lieutenant General Sir William Birdwood, whose decision should be final. Adler laid the matter before Birdwood, who asked whether it was possible for all Jewish troops in France to go to

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<sup>233</sup> LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/011.

<sup>234</sup> Boas, pp. 125 - 126.

Paris. When Adler pointed out that this was not practicable, Birdwood decided that the arrangements should be cancelled.<sup>235</sup>

Adler's diary entries for this encounter read:

4 March. To Freedman re Pesach [in Hebrew characters] Circular to Anzacs. 1<sup>st</sup> Anzac Hqrs – Henencourt. Had arranged for As to spend Pesach [in Hebrew characters] in Paris. Agreed to refer matter to General Birdwood. To make appointment with G.O.C.

14 March. Interview with Maj. Gen. Birdwood, G.O.C. 1<sup>st</sup> Anzac Corps – Henencourt. re. Rev D. Freedman's circular. General decided that no special arrangements shd. be made for A. –unless British troops cd. enjoy the same. Circular withdrawn.

Both Freedman and Adler corresponded with the Chief Rabbi about Passover leave for the Anzacs. Inevitably the matter came before the JWSC in London. Against a background of developing tension between the JWSC and Adler, the JWSC expressed strong disapproval of Adler's action, and met with him to convey it.<sup>236</sup> After and doubtless in part because of the events of Passover 1917, Australian Jewish chaplaincy was removed from the nominal control of its British counterpart and placed under the Senior Chaplain for Other Protestant Denominations of the AIF.<sup>237</sup>

Adler's diary, which records his meetings with each of the Jewish chaplains, contains only one further reference to meeting Freedman, on 14 June 1917. During August

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<sup>235</sup> Boas, p. 169.

<sup>236</sup> I discuss this in section 9.24.2.

<sup>237</sup> Boas, p. 92.

1917 Freedman buried a Jewish soldier in a British unit, the British chaplain being absent on leave.<sup>238</sup> He conducted New Year services for Australian, New Zealand and British soldiers. In December 1917 he was mentioned in despatches.<sup>239</sup> In December 1917 he resigned his position and returned to the UK. Adler, doubtless stung by the strictures of the JWSC, did not record his departure. By then their relationship must have been fragile.

With Freedman's resignation, the Australian Adjutant General asked Dr Joseph Abrahams as the Senior Rabbi of the Jewish Community of Australia to send to France a "Hebrew Chaplain under 40 years of age" to replace him. Early in 1918 Rev. Jacob Danglow was appointed to succeed Freedman. He communicated with Freedman for advice. Freedman replied that conditions on the front line were changing so rapidly that he could not and would not help, and Danglow would have to make his own decisions when he arrived in the field.<sup>240</sup> Freedman had two years of invaluable field experience which he could have shared with Danglow. But he had come to loathe the war and its carnage. On 19 January 1918 he preached at the West London Synagogue:

There was a time when I believed in man. I had faith in humanity. Today the idol is shattered. Man alone is responsible. The free will given to him to keep his soul pure and spotless he has abused. As a Jew I hate war. We blaspheme God with a horrible blasphemy when we ask Him to help us in pouring our venom, treachery or slaughter. To associate God with the slaying of millions, with pouring out liquid fires on man, with blowing poison gases on

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<sup>238</sup> Boas, p. 130.

<sup>239</sup> Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs*, p.136.

<sup>240</sup> Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, p.90.

poor women and children, so that their flesh writhes in agony as I have seen it writhe – to bring the name of God into this is to me an infamous outrage on the Holy Spirit.<sup>241</sup>

In March 1918 Freedman left London for Australia. He travelled via Palestine, where he spent two months, joining the Anzac mounted division outside Jericho. He witnessed the first of three attempts by General Allenby's Egyptian Expeditionary Force, including the Jewish Legion, to cross to the east bank of the Jordan River against staunch Turkish resistance, and travelled to Cairo and Jerusalem.<sup>242</sup> He departed for Australia in May 1918.<sup>243</sup> Senior Chaplain Miles described him as “a great little man...great in mental capacity, in his breadth of vision, in his love for and desire to serve the boys”.<sup>244</sup>

### 9.22.3. The British Jewish Chaplains and the Australian Forces

With only a single Australian Jewish chaplain at any one time, the British Jewish chaplains inevitably assumed a role in relation to the Australians. Based for six months in Etaples. Rev. Louis Morris organised services for Jewish soldiers from the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada and a sprinkling from Egypt and Palestine. In the interval between Freedman's departure in January 1918 and Danglow's arrival in August 1918, chaplaincy services for the Australians were provided by Rev. David Hirsch. Boas furnished Hirsch and Adler with records of Australian Jewish troops, and they him. Miles wrote to Hirsch:

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<sup>241</sup> Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>242</sup> Rodney Gouttman, *I saw it my way: Rabbi L. A. Falk and the “Jewish Legion” of World War One* in AJHS, vol. 23, part 2, June 2017, pp. 260-277 at p. 271.

<sup>243</sup> Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs*, p. 136.

<sup>244</sup> Boas, pp. 130-134. Apple, *The Jewish military chaplaincy in Australia*, p. 240.

Evidently you did not spare yourself or you could not have covered so much Australian work in addition to that which is your lot with the B.E.F. Kindly accept my thanks and congratulations.<sup>245</sup>

Barnett, who was stationed from April 1916 at Etaples and then from July 1916 at Rouen, introduced Freedman and later Danglow to their duties when they arrived and met many Australian troops.<sup>246</sup>

#### 9.22.4. Harold Boas (27 September 1883 – 17 September 1980)

The son of the Rabbi of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation, Harold Boas was rejected for military service for poor eyesight. In September 1916 he took an opportunity to approach the executive director of the YMCA asking to be appointed the Jewish YMCA Secretary. This was rapidly approved by the Australian YMCA headquarters in London, and Boas was appointed as the Australian YMCA Jewish representative of the AIF. In August 1919 Boas published *The Australian YMCA. With the Jewish Soldier of the Australian Imperial Force.*

Arriving in Britain in February 1917, Boas was based initially at the YMCA Hut at Durrington Camp at Larkhill and then at the YMCA Hut at Bhurtphore Camp at Tidworth, both on Salisbury Plain. He divided his time between Salisbury Plain and London, where he contacted the JWSC and the Jewish Naval and Military Association. He established contact and what he regarded as a very satisfactory basis of cooperation with Lipson (as the senior Jewish home chaplain), Adler and Chief Rabbi Hertz and placed himself unreservedly in the hands of the Chief Rabbi and official London Jewry to use him in any way they thought fit in the interests of the

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<sup>245</sup> Boas, pp. 108, 181-183.

<sup>246</sup> Boas, pp. 167, 179 -184.

Jewish men.<sup>247</sup> To facilitate his work and to establish his bona fides, authority was secured in September 1917 from the GOC of the AIF, Birdwood, in terms of an order which was promulgated:

Approval is given for Mr Harold Boas, the Hebrew secretary of the YMCA, to be the accredited representative in the A.I.F. depots in the United Kingdom, of the Australian Jewish chaplain.<sup>248</sup>

Australian troops - colloquially known as “diggers” - were stationed at numerous bases in the south of England. Boas spent twenty-one months on Salisbury Plain driving between camps in a car provided by the Australian YMCA, learning in the army the art of “wangling” petrol, which, he wrote, was then scarcer than gold. With the financial assistance of Jewish well-wishers in the UK and the Australian YMCA he was eventually able to purchase a motor car. He met Freedman and later Danglow when they made their official tours and organised their itineraries.<sup>249</sup>

Boas served for all practical purposes as a chaplain. He conducted a large correspondence on many aspects of soldiers’ welfare. He arranged private hospitality in London with Jewish families for the High Festivals and worked with Jewish individuals from Weymouth and Edinburgh who took it upon themselves to attend to the needs of Jewish soldiers. As each new man arrived in England from Australia or France Boas immediately wrote to him and then to his family, advising the man of any reply. Whenever he met a Jewish soldier he sent a card to his family in Australia; these cards, thousands in number, formed a link between his work, the men and their families. He encouraged men to write home regularly. He prepared

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<sup>247</sup> Boas, pp. 11-13, 165-166. LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/011.

<sup>248</sup> Boas, pp. 54-55.

<sup>249</sup> Boas, pp. 14-15, 42-44, 60-61, 170-177.

circular letters encouraging men to keep in touch with him, with the Jewish chaplain and with their families. He obtained and distributed Jewish and general literature, arranged marriages, arranged loans and made gifts of money and goods sent by people in Australia and by the YMCA, monitored casualties, visited soldiers in hospital, took them gifts and wrote to their families, arranged and conducted funerals and corresponded where possible with Australian Jewish soldiers who had been taken prisoner. With the assistance of the Australian, New Zealand and British military authorities, he was supplied about every three months with nominal rolls of all Jewish men in units throughout the UK and was kept advised by hospitals throughout Salisbury Plain of any Jewish patients who were admitted. He tried to compile a roll of Australian Jewish soldiers and gathered 2,175 names, of whom some 300 were killed.<sup>250</sup>

Jewish services were held on Salisbury Plain on Sunday afternoons, conducted by the officiating clergyman for the area, Rev. Dr J. Abelson of Portsmouth. Lieutenant Ellenborgren RAMC undertook to be responsible for weekly services at Bulford Camp, and Sergeant Goldberg of the 47<sup>th</sup> Training Brigade arranged services on Saturday afternoons at various camps on Salisbury Plain. The YMCA always made their huts available for Jewish gatherings, and services were held on Saturday mornings and Saturday afternoons in various locations. On one occasion the Senior Jewish Chaplain and the officiating clergyman for the area conducted services attended by nearly two hundred men in a YMCA hut.<sup>251</sup> The authorities granted leave whenever possible for the New Year, the Day of Atonement and Passover.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> Boas, pp. 17-34, 34-42, 47-50, 56.

<sup>251</sup> Boas, pp. 62-65, 176-179, 187.

<sup>252</sup> Boas, pp. 65-79.



Boas attended the conference on 20 February 1918 of Jewish chaplains and officiating clergymen in the UK.<sup>253</sup> In September 1918 he was mentioned in despatches and granted a commission in the AIF with the honorary relative rank of First Lieutenant.<sup>254</sup> He had left Australia intending to go to France. However no-one in Australia had realised the extent of the AIF operations in the United Kingdom, so after consultation with his headquarters and with Freedman it was decided that he should remain in the United Kingdom, leaving Freedman to confine his activities to service in the field. Still wanting to go to France, Boas made plans towards the end of 1918 to do so. However because of the suddenness of the collapse of the German offensive and the coming of the Armistice in November 1918 he spent only a few weeks there in January and February 1919, including visiting Paris and Brussels on YMCA business.<sup>255</sup> From Britain he returned to Australia in January 1920. Senior Chaplain Miles wrote of him: "Right worthily has he served us: I have never known a more energetic fellow."<sup>256</sup>

#### 9.22.5. Rev. Jacob (Jack) Danglow (18 (or 28 or 29) November 1880 - 21 May 1962)

Educated like Freedman at Jews' College (for whose entrance exam Michael Adler was one of his teachers) and University College London, Rev. (later Rabbi) Jacob Danglow travelled to Australia in 1905 to become the minister of the congregation of St. Kilda in Melbourne. He enlisted on 1 May 1908 and was commissioned as a military chaplain on 30 November 1908, becoming the first commissioned Jewish

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<sup>253</sup> Boas, p. 165. BJBH, illustrations, p. 201, photograph dated 1917.

<sup>254</sup> Boas, p. 55.

<sup>255</sup> Boas, pp. 15-17, 56.

<sup>256</sup> Apple, *The Jewish military chaplaincy in Australia*, p. 240. AJHS, vol. XXII, part 2, June 2015: Philip Moses, *Harold Boas – A Man of Principle*, pp. 184-210; Russell Stern, *Finding the Jewish Diggers of the Great War (Part II)*, pp. 211-284. Boas, Unpublished Autobiography.

chaplain to Commonwealth Military Forces in Australia. In 1909 Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen became the second.

Before the First World War Danglow attended camps of the Citizen Military Force, meeting Major John Monash, and attending meetings of military chaplains. The first Chanukah military service in St Kilda took place in 1911. During the war he ministered to Jewish troops in Australia and served on the military censorship staff. At the Chanukah military service at St. Kilda in 1917 he encouraged the Australian Jewish community to even greater sacrifices.<sup>257</sup> From early in the war he repeatedly requested his community to release him for service, but it was reluctant to do so. Eventually in 1918 he was appointed to succeed Freedman as the Australian Jewish chaplain in France. In May 1918 he set sail for Britain on the 39<sup>th</sup> Troop Convoy; on board he had an exact minyan of ten men for services.<sup>258</sup>

Danglow spent three weeks in the UK, attending a brief chaplaincy training course, on which his special (doubtless meaning Jewish) instructor was Simmons. Adler gave him some valuable hints, including that his life was precious and he should take care of it. Covering over a thousand miles, Danglow toured military depots in the south of England with Boas, met Australian Jewish soldiers, visited hospitals and participated in religious services. He took his first “air flip” in an Avro aeroplane and thought it one of the most exciting experiences of his life. He sent a letter to all Australian Jewish soldiers in France and the UK introducing himself, offering his

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<sup>257</sup> Apple, *The Jewish military chaplaincy in Australia*, p. 239. Paper by Apple, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow* (henceforth “Apple paper”), pp. 4-5. Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, pp. 14ff, 48-49, 60-61, 68, 75, 81, 83, 93. Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>258</sup> Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs*, pp. 136-137.

services and encouraging them to write to him and to attend his services at the front.<sup>259</sup>

In August 1918 Danglow went to France. His official reports in France from then until April 1919 are full and detailed. For a period in August he stayed at a casualty clearing station with Barnett, by that stage the Senior Jewish Chaplain, who enlightened him on the many matters appertaining to his new duties as the Jewish chaplain to the AIF. He arranged and conducted services wherever he could, and conducted the funeral of a Jewish soldier. He assisted Christian soldiers, more than once holding a Cross before a dying Christian soldier.<sup>260</sup>

Without transport Danglow was compelled to visit different units on horseback, by "lorry-hopping" and on foot. Even General Monash, with whom he was able to discuss the matter, was unable to arrange transport for him. To overcome the problem he adopted the plan of becoming attached to different divisions in turn, from which he worked through brigades and battalions, at the same time doing all that he could to get into personal touch with Jewish members of the other divisions. On two or three afternoons he was fortunate enough to secure the loan of a bicycle from another officer, and for a period in November 1918 a bicycle was placed at his disposal by the 5th Australian Division, which enabled him to travel widely to units, headquarters and hospitals. By October 1918 he had secured from each Australian Division a complete and up to date nominal roll of Jewish members serving in that division. In accordance with arrangements which he personally made with several casualty clearing stations in the forward areas he was kept regularly posted about

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<sup>259</sup> Boas, pp. 134-137. Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, pp. 94-98.

<sup>260</sup> Boas, pp. 137-138, 140-164. Apple, *The Jewish military chaplaincy in Australia*, p.240. Apple paper, p. 10.

the admission of Australian Jewish casualties. His correspondence increased daily in volume, and his clerk, Jacobs, helped him with it. He received lists from Boas of Australian Jewish soldiers recently evacuated from France to England and wrote to all of them.<sup>261</sup>

Following the news of the signing of the Armistice in November 1918 Danglow held a special thanksgiving serving at Oisement on the afternoon of Saturday 16 November. The following day at the invitation of his brother chaplains he read the Old Testament lesson at the Divisional Thanksgiving Services. In Amiens he participated in five interdenominational thanksgiving services at different brigades.<sup>262</sup>

In December 1918 Danglow wrote to his wife:

The numbers of the English Jewish Chaplains at the Front have always been ridiculously inadequate .... I am rather annoyed that our boys in England should have been handed over to the tender mercies of the Anglo-Jewish Chaplains who don't seem to understand our boys a bit and invariably rub them up the wrong way.<sup>263</sup>

This was a harsh judgement, especially as the English Jewish chaplains were doing their best to compensate for the even more inadequate number of their Australian counterparts. Senior Chaplain Miles wrote of Danglow:

He was indefatigable in his energetic labours for the men; no office or service was too small ... Somebody, referring to his handsome appearance and intellectual ability, jocularly referred to him as "of the Rolls-Royce type", but I

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<sup>261</sup> Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, p. 102. Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs*, p. 144.

<sup>262</sup> Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, p. 103. Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs*, p.141.

<sup>263</sup> Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, p. 105.

have known him on occasion travel in a Ford and frequently ride hard on shanks's pony for the purpose of helping the boys.<sup>264</sup>

For Passover 1919 elaborate arrangements were made by the English and Australian chaplains with the authorities for leave for Jewish soldiers for the whole of Passover and hospitality for them in Paris and London. In Paris services were arranged for all Jewish soldiers throughout France. There was an elaborate timetable for the first three days with services at the synagogue, Seder services, breakfasts at the Hotel Windsor and dinner there on the third evening followed by the theatre. Lipson having undertaken to minister to the Australian Jewish troops of Southern Command during his absence, Danglow travelled from Britain to Paris to conduct the Seder services. These were attended by over seven hundred American, Australian and other Jewish soldiers, and the guests included General Foch, the Chief of Staff of the French Army and by then the Generalissimo of the Allied Armies. Miles, who attended both Seder services, proposed three Australian "cooees", which were heartily given by the Australian soldiers, for the Jewish Welfare Board of America. This organisation, which had representatives in England and France, had invited the Australian Jewish troops to the Seder services, and no doubt paid for them.<sup>265</sup> From Britain Danglow returned to Australia in June 1919. He was to hold his commission for fifty-two years until 1960, serving in the Second World War as the Senior Hebrew Chaplain for the Commonwealth.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> Apple, *The Jewish military chaplaincy in Australia*, p.240. Apple paper, p.5. Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, p.108.

<sup>265</sup> Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs*, pp. 147-148.

<sup>266</sup> Boas, pp. 79-89, 138, 140. 161-163, 206-207. Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs*, pp. 220-221, 236. Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, pp. 106-114, 224-298. *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 8, p. 204, by J. S. Levi. Apple paper, pp. 7, 11. ww1chaplains.gravesecrets.net. Recollection of Rabbi Raymond Apple in conversation with me 1/1/2015.

### 9.22.6. Conclusion

The issue whether Australian military chaplains operated under British chaplaincy authority was unclear for virtually the whole of the war, so it was natural for the miniscule numbers of Jewish chaplains to regard themselves as effectively interchangeable. Freedman and Danglow were both moulded in Britain, with the same conventional British ministerial education, through which they had both come to know Adler. Failing to secure a British Jewish chaplain for the Dardanelles, the natural alternative for Adler was to arrange for Freedman to minister to British as well as Anzac troops there. It was equally natural for the British War Office to authorise Freedman in February and March 1916 to serve as chaplain to all Jews in the Middle East Force. On the western front Adler probably gave little thought in June 1916 to treating Freedman as under his authority, nor Freedman to placing Australian Jewish chaplaincy under British control, to which the Australian military authorities consented. British chaplain Morris ministered to Australian Jewish troops for six months, and in the interval of eight months between Freedman and Danglow British chaplain Hirsch deputised.

What called British control into question was the debacle of the Anzac Passover leave in 1917. Since December 1915 Freedman had acquired intensive field experience, at Gallipoli, in Egypt and on the western front. As well as Adler he had consulted Chief Rabbi Hertz, who, lacking the military awareness to anticipate Adler's concerns, had understandably welcomed his proposal for Anzac Passover leave. Freedman was Adler's contemporary and unlike the newly arriving British Jewish chaplains, some of them half his age, had little need of Adler's guidance and still less of his humiliating undermining of Freedman's authority.

By the time that Freedman's successor, Danglow, a forceful personality, arrived in August 1918, Adler had been succeeded as Senior British Jewish Chaplain by Barnett. Having observed Adler over a period of more than two years since March 1916, and benefiting from the chaplaincy infrastructure which Adler had created without Adler's sense of ownership of it, Barnett, a less authoritarian figure, was able to forge a more egalitarian relationship with Danglow than Adler probably had with any of the chaplains.

After the Passover of 1917 the Australian military brought its Jewish chaplaincy under its own control. Within Britain Boas necessarily remained effectively under British control until the end of the war. For the Australian authorities he was a civilian representative of the Australian YMCA, although in September 1917 he was appointed the accredited representative of the Australian Jewish chaplain, being granted a commission only in September 1918. But it was Passover in 1917 that marked the setting of the imperial sun over Anzac Jewish chaplaincy. The celebratory Passover in Paris in 1919 was a distinctly Anzac event. If Australia and New Zealand became nations at Gallipoli, the war initiated the weakening of British Jewish religious control over their Jewish subjects.

### 9.23. The Appointment of Further Chaplains

Chaplaincy appointments were made by the War Office. In September 1914 Lipson applied to serve, and did so thenceforth in Britain. In February 1915 he was commissioned and, with Adler away on his exploratory visit in France, continued to serve in the Home Command. The United Synagogue nominated Green to serve as an additional chaplain in Britain, but the authorities declined to appoint him, seemingly because the proposal was that he should serve on a less than full time basis. From France Adler wrote in May 1915 to Mr. Ornstien of the Visitation

Committee seeking another chaplain for Boulogne and suggesting Lipson. In June 1915 Adler wrote to the Chief Rabbi: "The work is enormous, the War will last a considerable time yet, & it is absolutely essential for a second man to be at work out here." Also in June 1915 the Visitation Committee applied for the appointment of Green to assist Adler in France, but the War Office declined to appoint a second Jewish chaplain. In July 1915 Adler pressed again. The United Synagogue urged the appointment of additional chaplains and nominated Simmons. After much discussion and correspondence between the Visitation Committee and the War Office, Simmons was appointed in August 1915 as an additional chaplain to France, and joined Adler.<sup>267</sup>

The Visitation Committee corresponded about the appointment of officiating clergymen with the War Office and, in the light of its advice, with the regional military commands. It sought the appointment of a Jewish chaplain for the Dardanelles, but the War Office declined on the grounds that the Jews were scattered in various regiments over a large area and the Chief Rabbi of Alexandria was doing very good work.<sup>268</sup> It also sought the appointment of a Jewish chaplain in Eastern Europe, but none was appointed. An application was also made for an appointment of a Jewish chaplain to the Expeditionary Force in the Mediterranean.<sup>269</sup>

In January 1916 Adler wrote a long and reasoned case for the appointment of ideally two more Jewish chaplains in France. In February the United Synagogue relayed it

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<sup>267</sup> VC/2/ 14-21. LMA, ACC/ 2805/04/04/001. JM, file 2011.74. BJBH, p.40. JC 9/7/1915, p. 14. JW 7/7/1915, p.16.

<sup>268</sup> In August 1915 Adler wrote to Hertz "re the Dardanelles. We certainly ought to have a man in that sphere of operations, by preference at Malta or Alexandria". LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/001.

<sup>269</sup> VC/2/14-21. Visitation Committee correspondence at JM, box 1005. JW 27/10/1915, p. 7.



to the War Office, requesting the urgent appointment of one if not two more Jewish chaplains for the BEF and of more officiating clergymen in Britain. In March 1916 a third Jewish chaplain, Barnett, was appointed to the Western front.<sup>270</sup>

The initiative had by then passed from the Visitation Committee to the JWSC, which from 1916 regularly considered ministers who might be suitable to become chaplains.<sup>271</sup> In August 1916, with four Jewish chaplains serving (three in France and one in Britain), the JWSC decided to apply for two additional chaplains, one immediately and one at a later date. For the JWSC this would have made six in all; it may not then have known of Grajewsky, who was by that time serving in Egypt. By September 1916 the War Office had made one appointment, of Morris, to France, and decided that no further appointment could be authorised at present. In October 1916 the JWSC decided to apply to the War Office for the appointment of another chaplain, but it is not clear if it did so. By April 1917 the War Office had approved an additional chaplain for France, Lieberman. So by April 1917 there were still only six Jewish chaplains for the whole of the western front (Adler, Simmons, Barnett, Freedman, Morris and Lieberman).

By December 1916 the War Office had sanctioned an appointment of a chaplain for Salonika, and in March 1917 Gollop was appointed. The issue of appointing a chaplain for Mesopotamia was under discussion by the JWSC in December 1916; by June 1917 the JWSC had applied for an appointment, which in July 1917 the War Office declined to make. In June 1917 the War Office asked the JWSC to nominate two additional chaplains for France. In July 1917 Major Schonfield, in charge of

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<sup>270</sup> BJBH, p.40. VC/2/22-30. JM, file 2011.74 and folder 2013.311.12. JC 10/3/1916, p. 11; 31/3/1916, p. 14. JW 15/3/1916, p.18.

<sup>271</sup> JWSC minute book, 5 December 1915 to 6 May 1919.

administration for the JWSC, submitted an application to the War Office for six additional chaplains for Home Forces; perhaps he had not sufficiently consulted, as the JWSC decided to ask for only three. Between June 1917 and July 1918 a further eight chaplains were appointed: six to the western front (Levy, Geffen, Hirsch, Price, Brodie and Levine), one to Britain (Goldston) and one to Egypt (Frankenthal). Two were in response to the request from the War Office; at whose initiative the others were appointed is not recorded by the JWSC. The appointment of Falk to the Jewish Legion in January 1918 involved its own politics and by-passed the establishment and anti-Zionist JWSC, which in November 1917 recorded its unanimous disapproval of a proposal received from Vladimir Jabotinsky for serving Jewish soldiers to be transferred into the Legion.<sup>272</sup> In August 1918 the JWSC considered a letter from Barnett, who had succeeded Adler as Senior Jewish Chaplain, urging the need for more chaplains, and it was decided to create a sub-committee to arrange for more chaplains to be appointed. In October 1918 it considered another letter from Barnett explaining that six more chaplains were required at once. Levin was appointed in October 1918 to Italy and Silverman as late as November 1918 to France.

Virtually throughout the war there was a continuing clamour for more Jewish chaplains. Letters were published in the press from soldiers about the shortage of Jewish chaplains and the vast areas which they had to cover without transport. Levin wrote that Jewish chaplains were so few in number that many Jewish soldiers never saw one. In May 1918 the Chief Rabbi called for more chaplains.<sup>273</sup>

Viewed through the prism of the records of the Visitation Committee and of the JWSC, the essential pattern throughout the war is of those communal bodies and of

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<sup>272</sup> I discuss this in section 9.29.

<sup>273</sup> JC 3/5/1918, p. 24; 10/5/1918, p. 6; 11/10/1918, p.18.

the United Synagogue not only, inevitably, identifying chaplaincy candidates but also initiating requests to appoint them, and of the War Office, doubtless constrained by considerations of finance and of formulae for the ratio of chaplains to troops, adopting a responsive decision making role. The only exception to this pattern is the period from the militarily critical summer of 1917 until the summer of 1918; the War Office requested two more chaplains for France in June 1917 and, albeit that the JWSC record is less complete, seems to have been more pro-active.

#### 9.24. Institutional Control of Chaplaincy

Throughout the war the leadership of the British Jewish community sought to oversee Jewish military matters, initially through the Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue and then from early in 1916 through the Jewish War Services Committee. I consider the initiatives for chaplaincy appointments and other significant activities of both committees.

##### 9.24.1. The Visitation Committee

Inevitably military matters gradually became a more significant part of the work of the Visitation Committee, although other aspects of its visitation work continued throughout the war. Minute book 1A of the Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue ends with the minutes of the meeting of 11 February 1914. The next meeting, with which minute book 2 resumes, did not take place, strangely, until 2 November 1914.<sup>274</sup> At its meetings on 2 and 11 November, 1914 the committee discussed the increased work owing to the military chaplaincy, visiting wounded soldiers, visiting Jewish soldiers and arranging services, the issue and provision by the Admiralty and the War Office of the new prayer book compiled by Adler for

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<sup>274</sup> VC/2/1.

Jewish sailors and soldiers and the provision of services and kosher meat in three prisoner of war camps.<sup>275</sup> At three meetings during 1915 the committee corresponded with the War Office and the Admiralty about furlough for Passover, visits to POW concentration camps and whether Jewish graves in the Dardanelles could be marked in the same way as those in France.<sup>276</sup> At three meetings during 1916 the Committee continued to deal with these matters, together with suggested officiating clergymen and the areas within the UK which they should cover, hospital visitation in the UK and correspondence about Jewish prisoners of war in both the UK and Germany. By this stage the initiative was passing to the Jewish Recruiting Committee, which by agreement with the War Office became known as the Jewish War Services Committee, effectively amalgamating with the Visitation Committee by incorporating two of its members.<sup>277</sup>

There was perhaps inevitable tension between Adler, with his single-minded vision of what needed to be done and trying to do it in the field with next to no support, and the Visitation Committee in London, trying to control chaplaincy in a managerial way and pressing Adler for reports. In a letter of 15 June 1916 the secretary of the Committee wrote that “A great deal of our trouble is due to Mr. Adler through acting without consultation in the first instance”, and that it was to be hoped that “our troubles will be mitigated” by the creation of the JWSC. Perhaps inevitably, this was not to be.

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<sup>275</sup> VC/2/3, 4, 7.

<sup>276</sup> VC/2/10-13, 19-21. JM, file 2011.74. Visitation Committee correspondence at JM, box 1005, file 2011.74 and folder 2013.311.11.

<sup>277</sup> VC/2/22-30. JM file 2011.74 and folder 2013.311.12.

### 9.24.2. The Jewish War Services Committee

In or shortly before December 1915 the War Office authorised the formation of a committee, initially named the Jewish Recruiting Committee or the Central Jewish Recruiting Committee, to advise on matters affecting the recruiting of Jews for the forces. Conscription had not yet been introduced and the need for men had become critical. Being accommodated at 8 New Court, the address of N.M. Rothschild & Sons, the committee became known colloquially within the Jewish community as “Rothschilds’ Recruiting Office”.<sup>278</sup>

The committee met six times in December 1915 to discuss recruitment, its minutes reflecting the pressure upon the Jewish community to address the reluctance of some men to enlist. Adopting the name the Jewish War Services Committee, it met during 1916 on twenty four occasions. For some time recruitment remained the predominant topic. It also dealt with arrangements for services, including services at Aldershot, Passover leave, what had become the pressing issue of the enlistment of Russian Jews living in Britain into the British Army and a request from Freedman for Jewish huts for Jewish soldiers on the YMCA principle, which it decided could not be provided. Rev. Morris wrote asking for motor cars for chaplains in France. By November 1916 it was decided not to provide motor cars, the chairman having investigated the matter during a recent visit. How in the light of the enormous difficulties of movement which Jewish chaplains faced the chairman could have reached that view is not explained. The issue arose again several times at the request of chaplains during 1917, but without result.

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<sup>278</sup> Lloyd, *Jews under Fire*, p. 84. JWSC minute book and other documents.

As with the Visitation Committee, the minutes indicate a developing tension between the JWSC and Adler. There seems to have been some tension with Lipson too, because the secretary was instructed at the meeting on 21 November 1916 to write to him defining his duties and the position as the chief of the office staff (presumably of the Chaplains' Office) of Major Schonfield.

There was formed amongst the Christian churches an Interdenominational Committee on Ministration to the Troops, which had held its first meeting in August 1916. The JWSC learned of this and on 22 November 1916, following its meeting the previous day, its chairman wrote to the War Office. Explaining that questions of festivals, Sabbaths and other religious observances played a very great part in Jewish communal life, he requested Jewish representation on the committee and for this purpose nominated the Chief Rabbi. The War Office replied on 5 December 1916 declining the request. It stated that the object of the committee was to bring the authorities of the denominations which were most largely represented in the Army into closer touch with one another and by constituting the committee an advisory body of the Army Council to avoid the risk of inequality of treatment between them. The Council were of the opinion that "the problems which arise in connection with ministration to Jewish soldiers are of a unique nature" and did not come within the scope of the committee, which existed for this purpose, so that a Jewish representative was unnecessary.<sup>279</sup> The Jewish community was not to achieve representation on this committee until 1926.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> National Archives, file WO/32/14826.

<sup>280</sup> National Archives, file WO/32/14825.

During 1917 the Committee met on ten occasions. On 30 January it discussed “the evasion of military service by Jews by underhand means”. On 2 April 1917 the explosive issue of Anzac Passover leave reached the Committee:

The Chief Rabbi informed the Committee that he had received a letter from the Chaplain of the Anzac Corps in France complaining that Rev. M. Adler had cancelled Passover leave granted to the Australian Jews, and he was of opinion that Rev. Adler had acted in a way which should meet with the strong disapproval of the Committee and that steps must be taken to ensure that such a thing could not occur again.

The chairman moved that a sub-committee be appointed to meet Rev Adler for the purpose of:-

- 1) Discussing the matter of the Passover leave granted to the Australians & subsequently cancelled.
- 2) Defining Revd M. Adler’s duties as Senior Chaplain
- 3) Ensuring that the system of regular reports from the chaplains to the Committee should be recommenced and adhered to.

An application was to be made to the War Office for Major Schonfield to be allowed to go to France to coordinate the work of the Chaplains’ Department. Clearly Adler had lost the confidence of the committee. On 11 April 1917 when Adler was on leave the JWSC discussed with him the cancellation of Anzac Passover leave. Adler explained his reasons, his difficulties with Freedman and his system of working with his chaplains, and promised that in future when any question of policy arose the matter should be referred to the committee. Seven days later, at its meeting on 18 April 1917, when Adler had returned to France, the chairman stated that reports

received from chaplains were not satisfactory and that Adler had been informed. At its next meeting on 16 May 1917 the committee noted letters received from Adler and Freedman. Relationships between the JWSC and Adler remained tense. At the meeting on 30 July 1917:

Major Adler explained that he could not supply the Records asked for by the Committee as he had no facilities for obtaining assistance. He read a letter from the Adjutant-General declining to give him clerical assistance. After some discussion Major Adler promised to give any assistance he could to enable the Committee to get their Records as complete as possible. The chairman informed Major Adler that the appointment of Chaplains was in the hands of the Committee and that such appointments would always be made without reference to him.

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Major Rothschild said that Rev. Adler was wrong in criticising the chaplains appointed & that the Committee would continue to appoint the chaplains. Rev. Adler in reply said that he regretted the view taken by the Committee & promised to give the Chaplains every assistance to enable them to satisfactorily carry out their duties.<sup>281</sup>

During 1918 the JWSC met six times. When in May it became necessary for Adler to relinquish his post in France, Lipson asked to be appointed to succeed him. The committee decided that Lipson should continue his work in the UK and instructed the secretary to write to the War Office asking that Adler transfer to London to take

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<sup>281</sup> I have not located any evidence of criticism by Adler of individual chaplaincy appointments.



charge there and that Barnett assume Adler's position in France. In August the committee decided that a scheme should be drawn up by Adler and Lipson for the regulation and division of chaplains' work, but the minutes do not give any indication that this happened. In October Lipson spoke of the predicament of various soldiers who had overstayed their leave during the recent High Holydays. In December the committee decided that it should carry out the arrangements for the demobilisation of chaplains and that the War Office should be informed. The JWSC met for the next and last time on 6 May 1919.

#### 9.24.3. The Visitation Committee Resumes

The Visitation Committee met three times during 1917, twice in 1918 and three times in 1919, dealing amongst its other responsibilities with isolated war-related matters. When it met on 27 January 1920 it had a letter from the War Office, written in response to one from the United Synagogue, to the effect that, upon the dissolution of the JWSC, the Visitation Committee would represent the Jewish community in matters connected with the army, and decided that similar letters should be sent to the Admiralty and the Air Force. It also discussed the appointment of permanent Jewish chaplains.<sup>282</sup>

#### 9.25. India

There were Jewish soldiers stationed in India since at least 1914. Chaplaincy for British troops in India was the responsibility not of the War Office but of the Indian Ecclesiastical Establishment, a body which comprised the principal Christian denominations and functioned as the de facto Indian counterpart to the AChD.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> VC/2/35-43, 58-64.

<sup>283</sup> Howson, *Muddling Through*, p. 152. Snape and Madigan, *The Clergy in Khaki*, per Snape, pp. 143-167.

The need for a Jewish chaplain in India was identified in May 1917, as a result of a civilian minister (of whom there were several in different cities in India) having to send detailed instructions for the conduct of the anticipated funeral of a Jewish soldier (who fortuitously recovered), but none was ever appointed.<sup>284</sup> For Passover of 1917 the Jewish community in Calcutta, which had supported Jewish soldiers since the start of the war, afforded hospitality to the troops, and services were conducted for some fifty-seven soldiers by civilian ministers in the Magen David and Bethal Synagogues. In Umbala an outbreak of measles prevented travel to Calcutta, so Seder and festival services for eleven men were conducted in a tent by Private Morley Dainow.<sup>285</sup>

At some stage there was formed a Jewish War Services Committee for India. In March 1918 it produced in Calcutta a Haggadah for Passover, which stated that copies could be obtained free of charge from the Supervising Officer for the Jewish soldiers in India. In 1918 Passover services were held amongst other places in Bombay, and New Year services in Calcutta. In 1920 Passover services were held in Bangalore.<sup>286</sup>

### 9.26. Prisoners of War

Jewish prisoners of war and enemy aliens also required religious ministrations. From early in the war the Visitation Committee and officiating clergymen liaised with the authorities and visited, supplied prayer books and conducted services for Jewish prisoners of war in prisoner of war “concentration camps” at Stratford, Islington and Alexandra Palace in London and at Frith Hill, Southend, Frimley, Newbury,

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<sup>284</sup> JC 25/5/1917, p.19.

<sup>285</sup> JC 25/5/1917, p.19.

<sup>286</sup> BJBH, illustrations, pp. 14, 46, 146, 181, 208, 216, 253. JC 25/5/1917, p.19. JM box 1009. Israel National Library, Yaari, Hagadot, no. 1887.

Portsmouth and the Isle of Man.<sup>287</sup> Rev. J. F. Stern visited Jewish prisoners at Stratford, Rev. D. Wasserzug at Frimley, Rev. S. Levy at Newbury and Rev. G. Prince at Alexandra Palace.<sup>288</sup> At the request of the War Office, Adler arranged in 1914 for services on Yom Kippur to be held for prisoners of war at the camps at Dorchester, Frimley, Newbury and Queensferry.<sup>289</sup> Stobs Detention Camp in Edinburgh held three thousand prisoners of war, including fifty-five Jews; arrangements were made for services for them during the High Holydays, and for a portion of the general burial ground to be set aside for Jewish purposes. Kosher meat was provided for three hundred Jews at Newbury internment camp.<sup>290</sup>

In January 1915 the authorities arranged for the transfer of all Jewish prisoners of war to the Douglas Alien Camp in the Isle of Man, which until then had held some eighty Jewish internees, and in June 1915 all of the Jewish prisoners in the camp at Stratford were relocated there. For the High Holydays of 1915, services there were led by German Rabbiner Dr Silbermann; by 1916 the building in which they were held had a Magen David erected on the outside.<sup>291</sup> By May 1916 the Jewish internees there numbered 623 of many nationalities, and had a Rabbi, religious services and education and religious facilities including a kosher kitchen and a burial society.<sup>292</sup> In 1916 a POW Help Committee for Jewish prisoners was formed. A wounded prisoner of war, Martin Weinlaub of Breslau, died in November 1916 in

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<sup>287</sup> VC/2/10-13. JC 6/11/1914, p. 26.

<sup>288</sup> JM, undated letter in folder re correspondence 1914-1916 in Box 1 re Jewish chaplains.

<sup>289</sup> JW 7/10/1914, p. 11.

<sup>290</sup> JW 18/11/1914, p. 23.

<sup>291</sup> JW 29/9/1915, p. 20.

<sup>292</sup> LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/005.

Fargo Military Hospital on Salisbury Plain and was buried in Southampton Jewish Cemetery, Rev. M. L. Gordon officiating and Dr Abelson delivering an address.<sup>293</sup>

The Visitation Committee corresponded with the War Office in June 1916 about British Jewish prisoners of war held in Germany as well as prisoners in Britain.<sup>294</sup> In Germany Jewish prisoners of war were often favoured as translators and were allowed to observe the Jewish festivals.<sup>295</sup> In 1917 the German military authorities allowed the Berlin-based Free Association for the Protection of the Interests of Orthodox Jewry to supply matzos for Passover to British Jewish prisoners of war. Even in wartime there were some diplomatic humanitarian exchanges between Great Britain and Germany, through a third party intermediary such as Switzerland, and the German government enquired whether similar privileges would be afforded to German prisoners in British and French prisoner of war camps. The Prisoner of War Department replied that the Army Council had empowered the army authorities to “authorise the issue of a money allowance in lieu of rations for days of observance.... in order that as far as possible the requirements of the men’s religion as to food may be met”.<sup>296</sup>

## 9.27. The Chaplains of the Home Command and of the Western, Italian and Salonika Fronts

Space permits only the most cursory treatment of the other Jewish chaplains. In the sequence of their appointments I consider them in two groups: those who served in

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<sup>293</sup> JM, file 2011.74. BJBH, pp.40-42. JC 13/8/1915, p. 15; 17/9/1915, pp. 21, 23; 1/10/1915, p. 11; 15/10/1915, p. 17. JW 15/9/1915, p. 14; 22/9/1915, p. 17; 18/10/1916, p. 10; 22/11/1916, p. 13.

<sup>294</sup> VC/2/26-30.

<sup>295</sup> Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War*, pp. 358-359.

<sup>296</sup> Van Emden, *Meeting the Enemy*, pp. 176-177. The book lists its sources but does not link them to the text. It refers to these communications having been in September and on 5 October 1917, which seems unlikely as Passover falls in March/April.

the Home Command and on the Western, Italian and Salonika fronts and those who served in the Middle East.

#### 9.27.1. February 1915. Rev. Solomon Lipson (1878 – 19 November 1959)

Rev. Solomon Lipson assisted Adler from the outset of the war, and served from February 1915 as the Senior Jewish Chaplain of the Home Command. He travelled widely around Britain and in June 1915 accompanied Chief Rabbi Hertz on the first part of his visit to France.<sup>297</sup> In September 1917 he was promoted major.<sup>298</sup> When on Monday 4 February 1918 the Jewish Legion marched through the City of London before departing for the Holy Land Lipson formally presented the Sefer Torah which had been donated to the Legion.<sup>299</sup> He was mentioned in despatches. When Adler assumed Lipson's role in September 1918 Lipson was appointed Jewish Chaplain for the Salisbury Plain area covering Wiltshire and Dorsetshire. In October 1918, by arrangement with the American Expeditionary Force, he assumed charge of the religious welfare of American Jewish troops in England. He was demobilised in October 1919.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> JC 25/6/1915, p. 17; 2/7/1915, pp. 12 – 13.

<sup>298</sup> JC 5/10/1917, p. 10.

<sup>299</sup> Patterson, *With the Judeans*, p. 269. Watts, *The Jewish Legion*, pp.104-106. JVL, Martin Sugarman, *The March of the 38<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers – When the Spirit of Judah Macabee Hovered over the Whitechapel Road*. JC 8/2/1918, pp. 15-16.

<sup>300</sup> National Archives, file WO/374/42334 (weeded 1937); WO/372/18/71166. BJBH, illustrations, pp. 56, 64, 201, 257, 364. VC/2/10-13; LMA, ACC/2712/13/44, ACC/2805/04/04/010. Adler Diary. Boas, pp. 165, 170-178. Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, p. 109. *Menorah* magazine, issue 8/4, December 1959, p.37. JC 11/9/1914, p. 15; 18/9/1914, p. 30; 25/9/1914, p. 6 ; 2/10/1914, p. 12; 20/11/1914, p. 15; 27/11/1914, p. 15; 12/2/1915, p. 6; 28/5/1915, pp. 14-15; 18/6/1915, p. 21; 26/11/1915, p. 12; 21/1/1916, p. 27; 28/1/1916, p. 27; 16/6/1916, p. 18; 28/7/1916, p. 11; 27/10/1916, p. 11; 3/11/1916, pp. 12, 19; 27/7/1917, pp. 10, 14; 7/9/1917, p. 14; 14/12/1917, p. 13; 15/2/1918, p. 17; 1/3/1918, pp. 6, 14; 8/3/1918, p. 14; 10/5/1918, p. 16; 4/10/1918, p. 8; 25/10/1918, pp. 14 - 15; 24/1/1919, p. 17; 2/8/1957, p.16 (wife's obituary); 27/11/1959, p. 15 (obituary). JW 16/9/1914, p.19; 12/5/1915, p. 21; 16/6/1915, p. 16; 30/6/1915, p. 16; 18/8/1915, p. 13; 16/2/1916, p. 17; 8/11/1916, p.14.

9.27.2. August 1915. Rev. Vivian George Simmons (16 September 1886 – 4 January 1970)

Rev. Vivian George Simmons was the only British Jewish chaplain of the First World War who did not adhere to the Orthodox tradition. A minister within the Reform movement, he served in France and Belgium from August 1915, joining Adler in Boulogne. On more than one occasion, including on Sunday 5 September 1915 and late in April 1916, he and Adler conducted a service together.<sup>301</sup> On 4 April 1916 he went to the front as the Jewish Chaplain attached to the Second Army, which contained around three thousand Jews and had a trench frontage of over thirty miles. He was attached to the North Midland Casualty Clearing Station, which was housed in the Catholic monastery in Mont-Des-Cats.

In the First World War there was initially no training for chaplains. As the war went on some training courses were introduced for Anglicans and chaplaincy training schools were created at Ripon in Britain and St. Omer in France.<sup>302</sup> Amongst the Jewish chaplains Lipson had assisted Adler whilst serving in the Home Command, and Simons received ten days' guidance from him in Europe before Adler relocated from Mont-Des-Cats to join the Third Army. On their arrival in Europe others of the Jewish chaplains<sup>303</sup> similarly spent a week accompanying a more experienced colleague. In the summer of 1918 the Australian chaplain Jacob Danglow attended a brief chaplaincy training course in Britain, on which Simons was his special (doubtless meaning Jewish) instructor, before embarking for France.<sup>304</sup> This is the only

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<sup>301</sup> Section 9.10., note 122. I discuss at section 9.32 the issue of denominational religiosity in the First World War.

<sup>302</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp. 204-209, 230-231.

<sup>303</sup> Including Rev. David Hirsch, whom I discuss at section 9.27.9

<sup>304</sup> I discuss Danglow in section 9.22.5. I have not ascertained anything more about this course.

evidence which I have encountered of any training for any of the Jewish chaplains for so demanding a ministry. Adler, probably the chaplains in the Middle East<sup>305</sup> and perhaps others of the Jewish chaplains received no training at all.

Simmons visited more than two hundred field ambulances, dressing stations, casualty clearing stations and general hospitals. He wrote that the padre was a “jack-of-many-trades”. He acted as an interpreter to wounded prisoners and as a stretcher bearer, and helped in operating theatres. He described other experiences:

On one occasion, I had to go out on a stormy day into the trenches in front of Armentieres to bury a young Jewish officer. Desultory shelling was going on all the time, and there I met a C of E brother-chaplain bent on the same sad duty. Shells began dropping all round. I started reading the Burial Service, the poor battered remains were lowered ... as slowly and as reverently as though it were a king going to his rest. Suddenly a shell dropped unpleasantly near, close enough to wound a man 20 yards away who had come to pay his last respects to his young Company officer. Suddenly every man Jack around us disappeared into prepared and as yet empty graves, and we two were left alone above ground. So I said to the other chaplain: I will stay with you while you do your job. His reply was: Certainly not. You do yours first: Your religion is older than mine! If that did not spell brotherhood rising above war, death and religious differences, I am a Dutchman!<sup>306</sup>

On Christmas Day 1916, as Simmons later wrote:

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<sup>305</sup> I discuss these in section 9.28.

<sup>306</sup> Michael R. Goldberger, *An Englishman and a Jew Reverend V.G. Simmons, ACD*, in *Medal News*, December 1993 pp. 12-14. Also referred to in JC 15/12/1916, p. 14.

The C of E Chaplain was away on leave, and the Colonel was worried about the sermon. He could not ask any of the other Christian Ministers who had each their own service. So he asked tentatively if I would preach! So what we had that memorable day was a Church of England service, in a Roman Catholic monastery, practically all the staff and many of the (walking) patients, Wesleyans, and the sermon preached by a Jew!<sup>307</sup>

At some point Adler recommended Simmons for a mention in despatches, but the Chief Chaplain of the area disapproved of him - for what reason we do not know - and opposed the citation. During leave extended for medical reasons Simmons was assessed by several medical boards from July 1917, diagnosed with neurasthenia<sup>308</sup> and in March 1918 found fit for home service. He was posted to the Aldershot Command, where several thousand Jews were stationed and where he had been conducting services, and spent two years there. Discharged in June 1919, he returned to his synagogue, and was given to understand that the Synagogue Council “resented the fact that I have been away for four years!” He remained there for twenty-six years until April 1940. He applied to be accepted again as an army chaplain but at the age of fifty-three he was “very rightly I suppose” rejected.<sup>309</sup>

Reverting to 1916, the *Jewish Chronicle* published on 15 December a sermon delivered by Simmons whilst on leave at his own West London Synagogue the previous week. Entitled “The Jewish Soldier’s Religion”, it was to generate profound controversy. Simmons’ theme was that his fifteen months’ experience had taught him

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<sup>307</sup> Michael R. Goldberger, *An Englishman and a Jew Reverend V.G. Simmons, ACD*, in *Medal News*, December 1993 pp. 12-14. Also referred to in JC 15/12/1916, p. 14.

<sup>308</sup> I discuss this term in section 9.14.

<sup>309</sup> Michael R. Goldberger, *An Englishman and a Jew Reverend V.G. Simmons, ACD*, in *Medal News*, December 1993 pp. 12-14.



that men who have faced death, not once or twice, but have lived continually in the shadow of death, will require a different religious life:

... We have adapted our services at the Front to the needs of the men, and we shall have to do so too when they come home. Rigidity, prejudice, sentimental adherence to the obsolete and outworn – these things must go. The only standard for public worship in the future must be neither law nor tradition nor custom, but only the individual needs of the men who have realised the meaning of the Presence of God. ...

These are some of the ways in which religion is going to be altered after the war. Do not be afraid of revolution when that time comes. The revolution is going on now. The essentials of religion have become necessary to the vast majority of men who are fighting now, and you may be certain that the men will create the religion they need. ... Cast out the stumbling-blocks, and sweep the paths clean, so that when this greatest of all adventures is a thing of the past, when this war has become history which, in spite of all our mistakes, we shall teach with pride and glory to our children, the new heavens and the new earth will be ours, and the mighty regeneration will have begun. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."<sup>310</sup>

Ventilated in the Jewish press, reaction from men who had served at the front, representatives of Orthodoxy and others was swift, forceful and contentious. "A more disappointing and disquieting message had never been delivered from a Jewish

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<sup>310</sup> JC 15/12/1916, pp. 14, 18.

pulpit” wrote Rabbi Dr Salis Daiches.<sup>311</sup> “My experience of my Jewish comrades in the Army leads me to believe that those Jews who were orthodox in civilian life, when in the Army still continue to do their best to keep up the laws and customs of their religion. ... the Jewish soldiers who rigidly adhere to their faith are honoured and respected by their non-Jewish comrades” wrote Gunner J. Mendelowitch, R.F.A., B Battery, 354<sup>th</sup> Brigade from Blackpool.<sup>312</sup> The *Jewish Chronicle* devoted a full page to discussing the issue, which it concluded “must be carefully sifted”.<sup>313</sup> Joining the correspondence, Adler did not take Simmons’ “brilliant sermon which has aroused so much interest in the community” as a challenge to Orthodoxy. Rather he took a letter supportive of Orthodox practice and critical of Simmons from a Lieutenant Loewe of the Royal Sussex Regiment, attached to the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, who had served in France, as a challenge to his chaplains. Rallying to their defence, he wrote that at the front the standard daily, Sabbath and festival services had inevitably to be adapted. “Our one purpose in our work is to endeavour to keep alive the Jewish consciousness in the presence of so adverse circumstance.”<sup>314</sup>

This controversy identified the challenge to religiosity which the war came to pose. It was never “openly and publicly” addressed as an issue of principle by “the elders of the community”, as one of the anonymous correspondents had advocated.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> JC 22/12/1916, pp. 16-17.

<sup>312</sup> JC 22/12/1916, p. 17.

<sup>313</sup> JC 29/12/1916, p. 7.

<sup>314</sup> JC 26/1/1917, p. 17;16/2/1917, p. 15.

<sup>315</sup> JC 12/1/1917, pp. 14, 15.

Towards the end of the war Barnett was to lament the decline in religious observance of many Jewish soldiers.<sup>316</sup>

### 9.27.3. March 1916. Rev. Arthur Barnett (1888-3 December 1961)

From March 1915 Rev. Arthur Barnett assisted Lipson in his military duties within the area of the St. Albans Command. Arriving at Boulogne on 30 March 1916, he served for more than four years in France, Belgium and the UK. He was stationed from April to July 1916 at the base depot at Etaples and in the summer of 1916 at Rouen, in both places ministering to Australian as well as British troops. From September 1916 he served with the First Army, for some period based in Boulogne. A photograph describing them as being on active service shows Barnett and Simmons together on horseback.<sup>317</sup>

In 1918 Adler recorded in his diary that Barnett visited him from 24 to 27 May “re my proposed resignation”, and that on 1 July a service which had previously been arranged was taken by Barnett, implying that Adler had not been well enough to do so. Adler later wrote:

It was with the deepest regret that I was obliged to leave France through a breakdown in health in July, 1918, immediately before the final counter-

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<sup>316</sup> National Archives, file WO/339/120492 (weeded 1936). BJBH, pp. 36-37, 40; illustrations pp. 198, 201, 249 (two photographs), 329. LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/001; ACC/3529/01/035/3529/1. Kadish, *A Good Jew and a Good Englishman*, p. 96. Report by Simmons of 11 July 1916 of 10 Months' Work (1 August 1915 – June 1916) as Jewish Chaplain to the British Expeditionary Force in France in JM, box 2011.74. Adler Diary. Lloyd, *Jews under Fire*, p.102. 1916 *Important Notice from Rev. Adler to Jewish Soldiers proceeding to France*. Madigan and Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience: Panter, Between Inclusion and Exclusion*, pp.176-177. JC 26/11/1915, p. 12; 5/1/1917, pp. 9-10, 24; 16/3/1917, pp. 7-8; 3/5/1918, p. 24; 20/1/1939, p. 27; 26/4/1940, p. 21; 9/1/1970, p. 39 (obituary); 23/1/1970, p. 43. JW 11/8/1915, p. 18; 22/9/1915, p. 17; 6/12/1916, p. 13; 13/12/1916, pp. 8, 12.

<sup>317</sup> BJBH, illustrations, p. 249.

offensive by Marshall Foch which destroyed the power of the enemy. As one of my colleagues remarked, "After I left the front, all went well!" I knew that in the capable hands of the Rev A. Barnett, whom I had trained to be my successor, the work of ministering to the spiritual needs of our men would continue to flourish.<sup>318</sup>

After the war a correspondence developed within the *Jewish Chronicle* on the need for post-war religious reconstruction. In the issue of 28 February 1919 Barnett contributed a lengthy letter; extracts, although long, are more effective than comment:

Generally speaking, I believe the effect of war on the Jewish soldier will have been to make him less Jewish in life and outlook. Men who before had lived a fairly Jewish life, will now, after these years of de-Judaising tendencies and influences, find it difficult to recover their faded Jewish consciousness. Army life has produced a sort of Jewish anaesthesia. It has been impossible for the Jew in the Army, cut off, as he has been from practically all Jewish influence – living, working, playing, eating and sleeping, in intimate association at every hour of the day with his non-Jewish comrades – it has been impossible for him to preserve his Jewish consciousness against the forces of his environment. The only correctives afforded him have been the efforts of the Chaplains and the distribution of suitable Jewish literature.

Let me give an illustration of what has happened to one type of Jew in the Army. I have had a good deal to do recently with certain Labour Units consisting for the most part of Jews, the majority of whom come from the East

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<sup>318</sup> BJBH, p. 58.

End of London, and all of whom came originally from a country that is, or was, regarded as the home of Jewish orthodoxy. In one of these companies, where the Jews are about 500 strong, they were getting an issue of bacon and pork in their daily rations. I therefore applied to the Army Headquarters for some substitute to be provided, and the request was immediately granted. Imagine my surprise and disgust upon my next visit to their camp at hearing from their Commanding Officer that the men had protested in large bodies and practically threatened to refuse work unless the bacon ration was restored for their breakfast. Now I have no doubt that these men had never tasted bacon before entering the Army; yet, in spite of a comparatively favourable Jewish environment, a short period of Army life had so reduced their Jewish consciousness as to make them actually prefer and demand swine flesh when other food was offered them in its stead. The only reply I received upon remonstrating with them was: 'It's not so bad when you get used to it!'

In another similar company I applied for the same change of rations. The Army authorities again were perfectly willing to accede to my request, but informed me that the C.O. of the unit stated that the majority of the men did not desire any change. Only fifteen out of more than 400 Jewish men were found to be 'objectors.'

Further, I have obtained Saturday as the day of rest for these Companies. Yet a large number prefer to lounge and smoke and play cards on the Sabbath rather than attend a voluntary service in the morning.

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And I ask myself whether men who have for so long faced life at close grips, who have so long stood at the brink of Eternity, who, if they have gained nothing else, have at all events learned something about the real and false values in Life – I ask whether such men are going placidly back to their pre-war synagogues, with all the shams, unrealities, and vulgarities still to be found there. Three years among them out here make me answer emphatically, ‘No.’ We shall have to simplify, purify, and elevate the synagogue if it is to have any attraction for, or influence upon, these men. By this, I do not mean ‘Christianizing’ the service. There is enough and to spare in our traditional Sabbath Liturgy, which if properly selected, and honestly and intelligently presented, will satisfy the needs of the most sincere and devout worshipper.

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The theme of Barnett’s letter in February 1919 did not differ greatly from that of Simmons’ sermon in December 1916. Whilst Simmons’ sermon had provoked fierce communal controversy, Barnett’s letter prompted almost no response. It ended with the tangible suggestion of the creation of a secular YMCA type organisation, which may have deflected attention from Barnett having advocated such, in terms of Orthodoxy, radical ideas. Simmons was a minister of the Reform Movement, which was an anathema to traditionalists, whilst Barnett was an Orthodox minister. Barnett had expressed himself in a letter rather than a sermon. Two years had passed, the war had ended and people were relieved and trying to adjust to demobilisation and the challenges of peacetime, primarily for many that of earning a living. In the wake

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<sup>319</sup> JC 28/2/1919, p. 22.

of the Balfour Declaration of November 1917 political Zionism continued to divide the Jewish community, and there was probably little appetite for another communal controversy.

In the summer of 1919 Barnett was mentioned in despatches, relinquished his post as Senior Jewish Chaplain in France and was appointed Jewish Chaplain for the Aldershot and Southern Commands. During the Second World War he served again as an army chaplain based at Aldershot.<sup>320</sup>

#### 9.27.4. September 1916. Rev. Louis Morris (28 December 1886 – 19 July 1941)

Rev. Louis Morris served from September 1916 until June 1917 in Etaples, Boulogne, Calais, Abbeville and Le Treport, ministering to British and Australian troops. He then served until January 1918 on the Ypres salient with the Fifth Army. In February 1918 he was sent to join the Italian Expeditionary Force, with which he served until August 1918. The Principal Chaplain with the Italian Expeditionary Force reported that he was in every way suitable for duty as an army chaplain and was an excellent organiser. Transferred back to France, Morris served at Bapaume with the Third Army from September 1918 until January 1919.

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<sup>320</sup> BJBH, pp. 40, 58; illustrations, pp. 129, 146, 215, 216, 249, 319, 321. VC/2/65-69. Adler Diary. Barnett, *The Western Synagogue*, pp. XV, 248, 271-2, 278. Boas, pp.179-181. Report by Simmons of 11 July 1916 of 10 Months' Work (August 1915 – June 1916) as Jewish Chaplain to the British Expeditionary Force in France and correspondence in JM, box 2011.74. 1916 *Important Notice from Rev. Adler to Jewish Soldiers proceeding to France*. National Archives, file WO/372/2/5021. Madigan and Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience*, Panter, *Between Inclusion and Exclusion*, pp. 159-181. JC 12/3/1915, p. 18; 10/3/1916, p. 11; 24/6/1916, p. 21; 31/3/1916, p.14; 23/6/1916, p. 21; 7/7/1916, p. 26; 25/5/1917, p. 19; 13/9/1918, p. 18; 28/2/1919, p. 22; 7/3/1919, p. 20; 29/8/1919, p. 10; 26/12/1919, p. 12; 8/12/1961, p. 31. JW 15/3/1916, p.18; 19/4/1916, p. 12.

In January 1919 the colonel formerly in command of no. 56 CCS, where Morris had been serving, reported that he was energetic, hardworking and tactful, spoke German well and was physically fit. After treatment for attacks of bronchitis and asthma which had started in February 1918 in Italy he was assessed in April 1919 as permanently unfit for general service but fit for home service.<sup>321</sup>

9.27.5. January 1917. Rev. Benjamin Benas Lieberman (5 February 1889 – late August 1976)

Rev. Benjamin Benas Lieberman served from 16 January 1917 in France, initially based in Rouen, until 17 January 1918, when he relinquished his commission.<sup>322</sup>

9.27.6. March 1917. Rev. Marks Gollop (10 July 1888 – 4 August 1950)

Rev. Marks Gollop served from March 1917 in Salonika in Greece as the only Jewish chaplain with the Salonika Force. Brigadier-General W. Stevenson Jaffray wrote: “The Rev M. Gollop has performed his duties to my entire satisfaction. He is a hard-working earnest man, with plenty of drive, and has shown great energy, enterprise, zeal, and ability, and in my opinion he is a very efficient and successful Chaplain.” In August 1917 a catastrophic fire in Salonika rendered homeless some 72,000 people, including some 50,000 Jews, representing around a quarter of the population of the city; a soldier wrote that Gollop’s work for the fire refugees should be written in golden letters. Gollop also served in Palestine, Egypt and Greece. By May 1919 he

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<sup>321</sup> National Archives, files WO 374/48984, WO 372/14/102504. LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/001. BJBH, p. 56; illustrations, p. 53. Adler Diary. Boas, pp. 183-184. Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, p. 102. Lloyd, *Jews under Fire*, p. 115. JWSC minute book. Researches of Mr Simon Ovens (who holds Morris’ war medal). JC 6/10/1916, p. 18; 26/10/1917, p. 19; 3/5/1918, p. 24; 30/8/1918, pp. 9, 11; 11/10/1918, p. 18; 25/10/1918, p. 20; 11/4/1919, p. 14; 1/8/1941, p. 5. LI 3/11/1916, p. 140; 8/12/1916, p. 258.

<sup>322</sup> National Archives, file WO/374/42115 (file weeded in 1937). LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/001. BJBH, illustrations, p. 109. Adler Diary. JC 25/1/1918, p. 25; 22/11/1918, p. 19; 3/9/1976, p. 17 (stating that he had died “last week”).



had been demobilised. He succeeded Adler in 1926 as Senior Jewish Chaplain, and served in that role until early in 1944.<sup>323</sup>

#### 9.27.7. June 1917. Rev. Ephraim Moses Levy (c. 1891 - 1969)

Rev. Ephraim Moses Levy served from December 1916 as officiating chaplain to Jewish troops within the Aldershot command. From 26 June 1917 he served in France, initially in Etaples, relinquishing his commission a year later on 26 June 1918. The Principal Chaplain to the British armies in France, Dr Simms, reported that he was of good character and suitable for duty as a chaplain.<sup>324</sup>

#### 9.27.8. July 1917. Rev. John Lionel Geffen (25 March 1869 – 15 January 1924)

Rev. John Lionel Geffen travelled around Britain from the outbreak of the war conducting services for Jewish soldiers. Commissioned as a chaplain, he served from 21 August 1917 in France, initially in the Boulogne area. After the war he narrated some of his experiences to his daughter, Vera Sharp, who recorded them.

These are extracts:

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<sup>323</sup> National Archives, file WO/372/8/52879. BJBH, illustrations, p. 258. Kadish, *A Good Jew and a Good Englishman*, p. 110. Taylor, *Chief Rabbi Hertz*, p. 228. VC/2/100-101. VC/3/5. JC 23/2/1917, p. 18; 9/3/1917, p. 19; 30/3/1917, p. 20; 20/4/1917, p. 16; 20/7/1917 p. 17; 21/6/1918, pp. 10, 13; 13/12/1918, p. 14; 23/5/1919, p. 18; 20/6/1919, p. 15; 29/8/1919, p. 10; 11/10/1940, p. 14; 6/7/1945, p. 11; 11/8/1950, p. 7.

<sup>324</sup> National Archives, files WO/374/41860, WO/372/12/70329. LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/001. BJBH, pp.45, 56; illustrations, pp. 31, 159. Adler Diary. *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 8 (MUP), 1981, re Rabbi Leib Falk. *Australian Chaplains in WW1* in <http://ww1chaplains.gravesecrets.net> re Rabbi Leib Falk. Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, p. 210. *Journal of the Great Synagogue Sydney*, June 1995, pp. 8-9. JC 15/12/1916, p. 16; 22/12/1916, p. 18; 13/7/1917, p. 14; 27/1/1939, p. 30; 19/1/1940, p. 29; 28/6/1940, p. 11. JW 16/2/1916, p. 19.

Father held services and meetings wherever he went, and owing to the generosity [*sic*] of a congregant, Frank Lazarus, he was able to give the boys teas and light refreshments of a light variety, and a cigarette.

This came to the ears of the senior Jewish chaplain [*sic*] [Adler] who wrote to father forbidding any refreshments as this was a bribe to come to the services, but the reply he received was that the refreshments were hardly worth walking as much as eight or ten miles to get, and that they would be continued whether it was allowed or not. Nothing further was said.

....

He was mentioned in despatches for attending soldiers under fire and recommended for the Distinguished Service Order (D.S.O.) but his senior officer Michael Adler would not pass this, as at that time, he had not received a decoration.

....

I mentioned the Senior chaplain [*sic*], whose name was Michael Adler. Later in the war he met my future husband, Leo Sharp. He knew Leo's family well and had at one time received much hospitality from Leo's father, and Leo thought it extremely kind when Adler turned up somewhere in France and sought him out for a chat. As senior chaplain [*sic*], he was the only Jewish one to have a car and a chauffeur. After a pleasant talk, Leo saw him to his car, they shook hands and the car was driven off, only to stop almost immediately and be reversed. Adler called Leo over to him.

'Sharp! Haven't you forgotten something' he said. Leo could not think of anything. 'You've forgotten to salute.'

Leo was a full private, being a poor soldier, and he never forgot or forgave this stupid show of superiority. He never spoke to Adler again despite, that as my father's colleague, he had to be invited to our wedding.

Geffen remained in the army as a chaplain until 1919. Adler recorded that he delivered addresses to his brother chaplains on aspects of Jewish life.<sup>325</sup>

#### 9.27.9. August 1917. Rev. David Isaac Hirsch (25 March 1884 – 19 January 1950)

Rev. David Isaac Hirsch became an officiating clergyman at Aldershot in 1915 and was commissioned with effect from 14 August 1917 as a chaplain. Travelling to France on that day he had the week of instruction customary for Jewish chaplains and was then posted to the headquarters of the Fourth Army. He travelled widely around the coastal area, casualty clearing stations, hospitals and the front areas, sometimes under bombardment. Between Freedman's departure in January 1918 and Danglow's arrival in August 1918 he took charge of the Jewish Anzacs. Attached to the Second Army and based at a casualty clearing station, Hirsch wrote home that:

The Colonel is an excellent fellow and everybody is most considerate. The other day they had a pork dinner and just before the Col. called me aside and said "I have arranged for beef to be put on your plate so that you can safely

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<sup>325</sup> National Archives, A24796 (certificate), files HO/334/62/24796, WO/372/7/230427. BJBH, p. 45; illustrations, pp. 146, 161, 167, 223. Memoirs of Vera Sharp. Adler Diary. Diary of Rev. David Hirsch. Levy, Elkan, *The New West End Synagogue in the Great War* and *The New West End Synagogue 1879-2004*, 11 July 2004 at [www.newwestend.org.uk/docs/EDLlecture](http://www.newwestend.org.uk/docs/EDLlecture). JC 5/8/1910, p. 13; 12/8/1910, p. 16; 28/7/1911, p. 24; 18/8/1911, p. 25; 24/5/1912, p. 30; 17/7/1914, p. 19; 10/12/1915, p. 23; 29/6/1917, p. 18; 6/7/1917, p. 13; 13/7/1917, p. 14; 27/7/1917, pp. 9,14; 28/12/1917, p. 2; 17/4/1942, p. 6. JW 9/9/1914, pp. 5-6; 11/8/1915, p. 15; 8/9/1915, p. 15. LI 21/6/1918, p. 16.

take what is put before you and won't have to feel uncomfortable." And their whole treatment of me is on a par.

Hirsch was on leave when on 4 February 1918 the 38<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers, one of several regiments within the Jewish Legion, marched through the East End of London before their departure for Palestine, and witnessed the event with pride. In the final push by the Allies to Germany he was for the final part of the journey, from Spa to Cologne, a distance of ninety-five miles, the only officer in charge of his convoy. He served in Cologne in the army of occupation, returning to Britain by August 1919. From 1922 until 1924 he served as a Territorial Army chaplain, on the active and then on the reserve list. From 1924 until 1931 he ministered in Australia to the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation, becoming a Chaplain to the Commonwealth Forces. Returning to Britain he took up a position in Hull, where during the Second World War he served as an honorary chaplain to British, Australian, Canadian, American, Polish and Free French soldiers in the area.<sup>326</sup>

9.27.10. October 1917. Rev. Harris Lewis Price (10 October 1864 – 23 December 1935)

Rev. Harris Lewis Price was passed as fit for military service as a chaplain, despite defective vision, and on 4 October 1917, a few days short of the age of fifty-three,

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<sup>326</sup> National Archives, file WO/372/9/208888. BJBH, p. 56; illustrations, pp. 64, 160, 345. LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/001. VC/2/85-87, 97-99. Adler Diary. Boas, pp. 108, 181-183. Diary, letters and artefacts of Rev. David Hirsch. My interviews on 22/5/2014 and 3/7/2014 with Mrs Barbara Posner who, in relation to his having helped in field hospitals, said that her father Rev. David Hirsch had always been interested in medical matters. JC 10/3/1916, p. 11; 17/3/1916, p. 20; 3/8/1917, p. 6; 14/9/1917, p. 25; 16/4/1918, p. 16; 13/9/1918, p. 16; 11/10/1918, p. 18; 8/11/1918, p. 12; 22/11/1918, p. 24; 4/4/1919, p. 20; 25/4/1919, p. 9; 2/5/1919, p. 22; 29/8/1919, p. 10; 26/12/1919, p. 12; 25/4/1941, p. 7; 16/5/1941, p. 16; 20/1/1950, p. 22; 27/1/1950, p. 8. JW 23/2/1916, p.17.

was appointed a chaplain. Arriving in France on 23 October 1917, he was posted to the Second Army at St. Ouen, based at no. 50 CCS at Mont des Cats. He served until 11 December 1917 with the Second Army; then until 30 January 1918 in the St. Omer area; then until 25 March 1918 with the Fifth Army, based at no. 34 CCS at Marcheipot near Peronne; then until 23 October 1918 with the Fourth Army, based for a period from 7 April at no. 34 CCS near Amiens; and thenceforth in Rouen. His last posting was attached to No. 10 General Hospital. Contracting colitis in October 1918, his home leave was extended. On Sunday 8 December 1918 he delivered the address at a thanksgiving service for the Armistice in Rouen.

A report of 21 January 1919 said "A zealous and hardworking Jewish chaplain, Mr Price has covered wide areas with great success". He was recommended for advancement. On 25 April 1919 he was demobilised. A report about him on 21 May 1919 under the signature of Dr Simms said that he was of good character; his physical fitness was poor and he was too old for active service; he was quite suitable for duty as an army chaplain except for the disadvantage of his age; and he had a perfect knowledge of the Yiddish language.<sup>327</sup>

#### 9.27.11. January 1918. Rev. Israel Brodie (10 May 1895 – 13 February 1979)

Rev. Israel Brodie was by August 1917 conducting military services at Aldershot. Commissioned and arriving in France on 8 January 1918 to replace Lieberman, he served in France and Belgium. In the Second World War he served from 1939 until

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<sup>327</sup> National Archives, file WO/374/55203 (file weeded in 1937). BJBH, p. 54; illustrations pp. 290, 337. Adler Diary. JC 18/6/1915, p. 19; 23/7/1915, p. 13; 3/11/1916, p. 19; 25/10/1918, p. 14; 20/12/1918, p. 21; 3/1/1936, p. 29. JW 24/5/1916, p. 14.

1945 as a chaplain, in 1944 succeeding Gollop as Senior Jewish Chaplain and in 1948 becoming Chief Rabbi.<sup>328</sup>

9.27.12. February 1918. Rev. Nehemiah Goldston (2 December 1864 – 26 October 1944)

From December 1916 Rev. Nehemiah Goldston regularly conducted services for soldiers at Wimbledon Camp, Bulford, Winchester and elsewhere. On 4 February 1918, at the age of fifty-three, he was appointed a chaplain. He served in the Home Command on Salisbury Plain, where for some months the Australian YMCA provided him with an office at its Salisbury Headquarters. He worked closely with Boas visiting hospitals and holding services every Saturday afternoon, to which troops came from far afield. Boas recorded Goldston's continuous travelling day and night and the very inadequate support which he received from the chaplaincy authorities for lodgings, office accommodation and dealing with an enormous correspondence. In December 1918 Goldston was transferred to Golden Hill Camp in Pembroke as chaplain to the 9<sup>th</sup> Russian Labour Battalion. By May 1919 he had resumed his civilian ministerial appointment.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>328</sup> National Archives, file WO/372/3/85117. VC/5/136 -143. BJBH, illustrations, p. 43. Taylor, *British Chief Rabbis*, pp. 370-373. Adler Diary. My interviews with Israel Brodie's relatives Stanley Brodie QC 24/11/2014 and 5/12/2014 and Michael Garston 19/10/2014. JC 17/3/1916, p. 28; 10/8/1917, p. 14; 21/6/1918, pp. 10, 13; 16/2/1919, p. 23. JW 23/2/1916, p. 14.

<sup>329</sup> National Archives, file WO/372/8/51695. BJBH, illustrations p. 201. *The London Gazette Supplement* 21/2/1918 (2288); *The London Gazette* 11/10/1921. Boas, pp. 178-179. LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/001. Research of Mrs Rosemary Wenzelul (great-niece). JC 18/9/1914, p. 22; 4/6/1915, pp. 10, 19; 11/6/1915, p. 2; 25/6/1915, p. 23; 3/9/1915, p. 30; 24/3/1916, p. 31; 19/5/1916, p. 16; 20/12/1918, p. 14; 16/5/1919, p. 14; 27/11/1942, p. 9; 3/11/1944, p. 11. JW 9/6/1915, pp. 11, 20-21; 16/6/1915, pp. 16, 21; 22/3/1916, p. 24. *New York Times* 1/8/1915.

9.27.13. July 1918. Rev. Nathan Levine (10 July 1890 – 17 May 1958)

Rev. Nathan Levine was appointed a chaplain on 4 July 1918 and travelled to France that day because of the illness of Adler and the resignation of Levy on 26 June 1918. He served until November 1919 with the 24<sup>th</sup> General Hospital and as Jewish Chaplain to units in the Etaples Area. At one point whilst visiting hospitals “up the line” an aerial torpedo landed on his tent, so that he became for a while a patient in the hospital at Abbeville.<sup>330</sup> In October 1919 he became sick and was sent to a hospital in France. It appeared that he was anaemic and debilitated, with chronic laryngitis, all attributable to active service conditions, and he was transferred to Cambridge Military Hospital in Aldershot. His report, by a Brigadier-General for the Etaples Area, stated that “As chaplain to the Jews Mr Levine has to cover a very wide Area. During the six months he has been in Etaples he has done his utmost to respond to the many calls which have come to him.” On 10 December 1919 he was demobilised. For a period after the Second World War Levine served as the legal guardian to more than two hundred refugee children in London.<sup>331</sup>

9.27.14. October 1918. Rev. Walter Levin (25 November 1872 – 18 September 1943)

Rev. Walter Levin served initially for some four months in Italy. He was then posted to the Middle East, so I consider him below.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> This is the only specific instance which I have encountered of a Jewish chaplain being directly exposed to enemy fire in the First World War. Rev. Freedman was fortunate to be absent when his billet was shattered by shelling: section 9.22.2.

<sup>331</sup> National Archives, file WO/374/41851. LMA, ACC/ 2805/04/04/001. LMA, ACC/2793/02/04/01, refs 107/110, 167/78. BJBH, illustrations, pp. 160, 161. Adler Diary. *A Memoir – the Reverend Nathan Levine H.C.F.*, esp. pp. 3 -7, 14, 18 - 19, 21, 33. Jolles, *A Short History of the Jews of Northampton*. JC 6/9/1918, p. 26; 13/12/1918, pp. 14-15; 2/5/1919, p. 22; 20/6/1919, p. 15; 23/5/1958, p. 29.

<sup>332</sup> I consider him in section 9.28.3.

#### 9.27.15. November 1918. Rev. Henry Phillips Silverman (15 October 1894 – 1979)

Rev. Henry Phillips Silverman was appointed a chaplain on 22 November 1918.

Embarking for France on 26 November he served within the area of the Third Army.

Serving in the army of occupation in Germany, his last posting was at no. 64 CCS.

He was demobilised on 28 October 1919.<sup>333</sup>

#### 9.28. The Chaplains in the Middle East

##### 9.28.1. March 1915. Rabbi Raffaello Della Pergola (15 June 1877 - 24 August 1923)

At the start of the First World War about twelve thousand British subjects, most of them Jews, fled or were expelled by the Turks from Palestine. Most went to British protected Egypt, many to refugee camps in Alexandria, where Rabbi Raffaello Della Pergola, the Chief Rabbi of Alexandria, was amongst those who assisted them. He was one of those on the platform at a meeting attended by about two hundred young people on 2 March 1915 which resolved “to form a Jewish Legion and to propose to England to make use of it in Palestine”.

Lt. Col. John H. Patterson was appointed to command the Zion Mule Corps, and recruited for it in Cairo and Alexandria. Della Pergola, although remaining a civilian, was appointed its honorary chaplain. Some five hundred Jews volunteered. In an address at their swearing-in ceremony in March 1915 Della Pergola compared them to the Children of Israel who had been led out of Egypt and referred to Patterson as a second Moses who would lead them to the Promised Land. He distributed to the soldiers a booklet which listed British favours to Jews, contained rules for behaviour

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<sup>333</sup> National Archives, file WO/374/62350. BJBH, illustrations, p. 304. Romain, *Royal Jews*, pp. 231 - 235. Jolles, *A Short History of the Jews of Northampton*. JC 29/11/1918, p. 20; 31/1/1919 p. 19; 2/5/1919 p. 22; 20/6/1919 p. 15; 7/7/1939, p. 24; 30/11/1979, p. 11.



towards officers and apt Biblical quotations and bid them be good soldiers. When the Corps paraded in April 1915 before its departure for Gallipoli Della Pergola gave a stirring address. He did not accompany them to Gallipoli, but whilst they were there was consulted over the issue which arose of their bacon ration.

In August 1915 Della Pergola officiated at the presentation in Alexandria of a Sefer Torah to some one hundred and twenty-five new recruits to the Corps, and in March 1916 at the inauguration of a mausoleum in the Jewish cemetery there to the memory of those who had fallen. He organised services for Jewish soldiers in Egypt, took a great interest in their welfare and instructed that he was to be informed as soon as a Jewish death occurred. In February 1918 he officiated at a service in Alexandria to welcome the Jewish Legion, also commanded by Patterson, on its arrival.<sup>334</sup>

9.28.2. December 1915. Rev. Shimon (Simon) Grajewsky (1867/8 - c. 13 November 1942)

Born in Poland to parents from two rabbinical families, Rev. Shimon (Simon) Chaim Grajewsky was educated in Liverpool, where his father served as a Rabbi, and at the

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<sup>334</sup> Patterson, *Gallipoli*, pp. 34-37, 40, 43-46, 235. Jabotinsky, *The Story of the Jewish Legion*, pp. 10, 18, 34, 40, 107. Watts, *The Jewish Legion*, pp. 26-27, 46. Liddle, *Men of Gallipoli*, pp. 161/2, and *The Gallipoli Experience*, p. 123, citing Parker as an unpublished source in recollections in manuscript, tape recorded recollections and photographs. Waite, *The New Zealanders at Gallipoli*, p. 164. Pendlebury, *Portraying "the Jew"*, pp. 124-125. Brian, *The Seven Lives of Colonel Patterson*, generally. Cecil Bloom, *Colonel Patterson, Soldier and Zionist* in JHS, vol.31, 1988-1990, pp. 231-248. Martin Sugarman, *The Zion Muleteers at Gallipoli (March 1915-May 1916)* in JHS, vol.36, 1999-2000, pp.113-139, and in JVL. Dr H. H. Ben-Sasson, *The Zion Mule Corps* at Jabotinsky Institute in Israel, jabotinsky.org, K1-28, pp.10-11. Reports of Rev. D. I. Freedman in JM, file 2011.74. JC11/6/1915, p. 10; 11/2/1916, pp. 8, 18; 31/3/1916, p. 15. JW 5/5/1915, p.18; 8/9/1915, p. 22; 29/9/1915, p. 23; 16/2/1916, p. 17; 22/3/1916, p.18; 29/3/1916, p. 15. Information provided by grandson Professor Sergio Della Pergola.

yeshiva at Volozin in Lithuania, and from Zionist conviction settled with his family in Jerusalem. At the outbreak of the First World War he was amongst the thousands who were expelled from Palestine by the Turks. There is some unclear suggestion that Grajewsky served with the Zion Mule Corps at Gallipoli, and the *Jewish Chronicle* reported that Captain Robert Sebag-Montefiore died in his arms. Service at Gallipoli is not however recorded in his War Office file, nor did Grajewsky invoke it when he later sought a pension for his service, both of which might have been expected.

Grajewsky's appointment as a temporary chaplain seems to have dated from 11 December 1915, when he was aged around forty-seven. In March 1916 he was appointed visiting chaplain to the Jewish wounded in Alexandria. On 26 August 1916 he was appointed a temporary chaplain fourth class for general service with Egypt Force for one year, and from 17 September 1916 as a Temporary Chaplain to the Forces Fourth Class and Principal Chaplain for Catholes<sup>335</sup>. In September or November 1916 Rabbi Yitzchak Frankenthal succeeded him as Acting Jewish Chaplain at Alexandria and, based in Cairo, Grajewsky became the chaplain to all of the Jewish troops in Egypt. In June 1918 he was mentioned in despatches.

In 10 December 1918 the JWSC in London decided not to recommend Grajewsky as chaplain to the forces in Egypt. The background to this decision is not recorded; Grajewsky was already serving in that role, so presumably this addressed the future. On 13 January 1919 the Principal Chaplain to the E.E.F., E.R.Day, wrote on Grajewsky's report that "This chaplain ministers to the Jewish Soldiers east of the Canal. His visits are carried out regularly. I am not in a position to comment on his

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<sup>335</sup> Seemingly a place in Egypt, although I cannot locate it.

ministerial abilities.” Grajewsky was demobilised on 10 June 1919. He requested a pension on account of his bad health and overworking in doing his duty and sought a position or a recommendation, but the War Office declined.<sup>336</sup>

### 9.28.3. October 1918. Rev. Walter Levin (25 November 1872 – 18 September 1943)

Rev. Walter Levin served from March 1917 until October 1918 as an officiating clergyman to Jewish troops in Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk within the Army’s Eastern Command. In a letter in March 1918 to the *Jewish Chronicle*, he wrote that he had held innumerable services; it was the exception for a Jewish officer to attend; men would not come to the services, and in one instance were found playing cards and smoking in the very hall they had been given by the authorities for religious purposes.

On 12 October 1918 at the age of forty-five Levin was appointed as a Temporary Chaplain, and on 4 December 1918 he was posted to no. 9 CCS in Italy. In a report of 2 January 1919 the RAMC Lieutenant-Colonel commanding no. 9 CCS wrote:

Captain W. Levin has been attached to this CCS about one month. During that time I have formed a high opinion of his work. He is very energetic, tactful and nothing is too much trouble for him to do. He is very tireless in hunting for extra comforts for the patients no matter what denomination they belong to - he is greatly liked by both patients and staff.

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<sup>336</sup> National Archives, files WO/374/28520, WO/372/24/25006. Myer, *Soldiering of Sorts*, pp. 125, 134. Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs*, p. 120. BJBH, illustrations, pp. 31, 234, 312. *Encyclopaedia of the Founders and Builders of Israel*, vol.1, pp. 450-451. Jabotinsky, *The Story of the Jewish Legion*, pp. 153-154. Reports of Rev. D. I. Freedman in JM, file 2011.74. JWSC minute book, 10/12/1918. JC 31/3/1916, p. 14; 10/11/1916, p. 13; 20/7/1917, p. 17; 14/9/1917, p. 25; 21/6/1918, p. 10; 11/10/1918, p. 18. JW 29/3/1916, pp. 15-16; 5/4/1916, p.13; 15/11/1916, p. 15; 20/11/1942, p. 13 (obituary).

The chaplain serving as Assistant to the Principal Chaplain at GHQ of the Italian Expeditionary Force added on 5 January 1919 that Levin was “possessed of exceptional energy”. In April 1919 Levin was selected for duty with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force and told to be prepared to embark from 19 April. In May he was promoted to be a Temporary Chaplain to the Forces Third Class, in the rank of major, acting as a Senior Chaplain to the Forces.

In August 1919 in Egypt Levin clashed strongly with Rev Yitzchak Frankenthal. In November 1919 Frankenthal was demobilised. Levin continued to serve in Egypt, Palestine and Syria until March 1920, when he was demobilised, reverting to the rank of Temporary Chaplain to the Forces Fourth Class.<sup>337</sup>

9.28.4. June 1917. Rabbi Yitzchak Frankenthal (14 October 1881 – 17 December 1955) <sup>338</sup>

Born in 1881 into a Rabbinic family and of Russian nationality, Rabbi Yitzchak Uri Frankenthal received a yeshiva education in Jerusalem and became a naturalised British subject in 1909. After ministering in the Transvaal he was obliged in 1916 like Grajewsky to move from Palestine to Alexandria, where at the initiative of Della Pergola he ministered to Jewish soldiers.

With the departure of Australian chaplain Freedman for France in June 1916, Frankenthal served from September or November 1916 as acting Jewish Chaplain for British Forces to the Alexandria District and later, headquartered in Cairo, to all of the Jewish troops in Egypt. Supported by references from Chief Rabbi Hertz and the

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<sup>337</sup> National Archives, file WO/374/41850. BJBH, illustrations p. 201. JC 8/3/1918, p. 7; 22/3/1918, p. 8; 3/5/1918, p. 24; 14/5/1920, p. 13; 17/2/1922, p. 8; 24/9/1943, p. 8; 1/10/1943, p. 9.

<sup>338</sup> Frankenthal was appointed some eight months before Levin: section 9.28.3.

JWSC in London (who noted that it would be desirable for Frankenthal and the existing Jewish chaplain to coordinate in their work) and from Della Pergola, Frankenthal was appointed a chaplain on 11 June 1917. On 28 February 1918 the 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Jewish Legion, with its chaplain Rev. L. A. Falk, arrived in Egypt from Britain on route to Palestine. The following day a service was held in the Great Synagogue in Alexandria, at which Frankenthal gave the address of welcome.<sup>339</sup>

In a report on Frankenthal of 13 January 1919, Principal Chaplain E. R. Day wrote: "This chaplain ministers to Jewish soldiers west of the Canal. His visits are carried out regularly. I am not qualified to speak of his abilities as a Rabbi. No adverse reports on him have been made to me." A further report of 28 February 1919 records that he had served for two years and five months: from September 1916 until May 1918 with all units in the Alexandria District; from June 1917 until November 1918 in the Alexandria District and with all units east of the Canal and the front line; and from December until the present date with all units west of the Canal. He was fully qualified in the Hebrew and Yiddish languages, had a knowledge of French and understood Arabic and German. Countersigning the report, somebody, perhaps R. E. Boyle, wrote "Mr Frankenthal has been very energetic in the performance of his duties in this District."

In perhaps August 1919 Levin, who had arrived in around May 1919, wrote a highly critical report on Frankenthal. The report did not reach Frankenthal's army file, but Frankenthal's reply did. Frankenthal had become ill - the illness is not recorded - and spent some time in Alexandria Military (Officers) Hospital. Written from the hospital at some point between August and November 1919 and undated, his letter, perhaps

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<sup>339</sup> Falk Memoirs 7/6/1929.

typed later from a manuscript letter, occupies more than eight closely typed large pages. In thirty-three numbered paragraphs it extracted from Levin's report his criticisms of Frankenthal, and set out Frankenthal's responses, in so doing narrating a lot about Frankenthal's service.

Levin's criticisms were of a lack of training, recognised qualification or experience as a minister of religion; a failure to conduct services; insufficient visits to troops, hospitals, military prisons, field punishment compounds and prisoner of war camps; an absence of records of burials conducted; a disorganised office; a failure to provide returns and records requested by the JWSC in London; and an absence of financial records. Frankenthal's responses were full, detailed and cogently argued. In response to an allegation that Colonel Samuels, in command of the 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, had threatened him with disciplinary action for demanding money from a local civilian dramatic performance on behalf of a local comforts fund, Frankenthal wrote that Samuels, when in Cairo en route for the U.K., had summoned him to his hotel for a private interview and had threatened him with instant demobilisation if he was not to give up the scheme for opening the Jewish Soldiers' Club in Cairo:

The reason he gave for such opposition was that to his opinion it was high time for Jews to abandon their ... beliefs and one [sic] for all assimilate with the rest of the world which he hoped they will one day be obliged to do. He also considered the upkeep of chaplains and particularly Jewish Chaplains – a waste of public funds ... Mr Samuels concluded with assuring me that he would have me removed before long.

33. I may also point out that all personal dealings that passed between Mr Levin and myself consisted and [sic] 4 interviews of varying durations from three to 10 minutes. The last of these lasting about 10 minutes took place in Mr Piocotto's office during which owing to my having forgotten to salute him, Mr Levin's excitement rose to a high pitch, and the threats he used are best left unrepeated.

Frankenthal's letter concluded:

Lieutenant Lissack, recently of the 40<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers an intimate friend of Mr Levin, told me that Mr Levin liked very much to remain out here as chaplain to this Force, and that he asked him to write to his (Mr Lissack's [sic] father, an influential member of the London community, enlisting his help towards that end.

Generally, Mr Levin's attitude gave the impression that he had not come out with intention of 'investigating' matters but to find means 'somehow' to carry out certain prearranged plans.

Some support for this derives from Adler, who when Levin died in 1943 wrote in his obituary:

As a chaplain in the last war he served in Italy and in Palestine and won universal esteem. At my suggestion the War Office sent him to Palestine to clear up an awkward situation in the Chaplaincy work, which task he accomplished with such tact as to gain the highest commendation of the authorities.

In August 1919 Frankenthal's demobilisation was ordered. On 10 November 1919 the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force wrote to the War Office in London, which received his letter on 23 November:

In continuation of my A.1/18427 dated the 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1919, I have the honour to forward herewith a letter received from the Reverend I. Frankenthal, Chaplain to the Forces (Jewish), in reply to the report of the Reverend W. Levin, Senior Chaplain to the Forces (Jewish).

I consider that there is nothing in the reply which warrants my changing my previous decision that the Reverend I. Frankenthal should be demobilised, and orders for his demobilisation have been issued.

Frankenthal relinquished his commission from 30 December 1919, and by an order of 10 January 1920 was invalided out of the army on the recommendation of a medical board. His army file noted that because his demobilisation had been ordered in August 1919, before he went sick, he was not to be gazetted out of the army on account of ill health. Approving his appointment in September 1921 as an Honorary Chaplain to the Forces, fourth class, the Deputy Chaplain General noted that adverse reports were not to be applied. Doubtless this meant Levin's report.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> National Archives, files WO 374/22512 (Frankenthal); WO 374/41850 (Levin); WO/374/28520, WO/372/24/25006 (Grajewsky). LMA, ACC/ 2805/04/04/001. BJBH, illustrations, pp. 234, 312. Zalaznik family tree. Reports of Rev. D. I. Freedman in JM, file 2011.74. Documents in the possession of Barry (son of Harry) Moss and my interview with him on 3/7/2014. JC 11/2/1916, pp. 8, 18; 28/4/1916, p. 14; 10/11/1916, p. 13; 29/6/1917, pp. 18-19; 15/11/1918, p. 16; 24/9/1943, p. 8 (Levin obituary). JW 9/2/1916, p. 20; 18/10/1916, pp. 10, 14; 15/11/1916, p. 15. On Principal Chaplain E. R. Day, Howson, *Muddling Through*, pp. 53, 150.



#### 9.28.5. The Conflict between Frankenthal and Levin

Levin and Frankenthal both received complimentary references from their superiors. Without Levin's letter, it is difficult to evaluate the merits of his strictures and Frankenthal's responses. English born, English educated and some ten years older than Frankenthal, who was Russian born and traditionally educated in the yeshivot of Jerusalem, Levin may have been conscious of Frankenthal's doubtless superior Jewish education and have had difficulty in relating to him. He may not have known that Frankenthal was a Rabbi, or he may have been resentful of it. Levin was not a Rabbi, for the reasons of history and authority in Britain discussed above.<sup>341</sup>

When Levin arrived in Egypt as Frankenthal's senior officer in around May 1919, Frankenthal had already been in post for some two years. If, as Frankenthal wrote, Levin had only four brief meetings with him, this seems hardly sufficient to have enabled him to fairly assess and devastatingly criticise Frankenthal's performance over a two year period when Levin had not been there. Read together with the comments of Lissack and Adler, this suggests that at Adler's initiative Levin had come briefed to resolve a perceived chaplaincy problem and that he had opportunistically seen a way to remain in a posting which he found congenial by displacing Frankenthal. He was a single man living with his two sisters and so without domestic ties, with a doubtless unique and, at the age of forty-six, last opportunity whilst occupying a privileged status within the military hierarchy to enjoy something of the world.

For the matter to have reached the War Office, as Adler wrote that it did, and a decision to have been made to despatch a chaplain from another front, the complaint

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<sup>341</sup> Section 6.3.

must have emanated from a level of some military seniority. The impetus, or at least a contributory factor, may have been the malign influence of the anglicised Lieutenant Colonel F. D. Samuels. Samuels was an officer of the 3<sup>rd</sup> London Regiment of the Territorial Force, and the Commanding Officer of the 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, which was one of the battalions of the Jewish Legion.

Samuels had also encountered Grajewsky. On 15 March 1919 Samuels wrote, on the letterhead of Shepheard's Hotel in Cairo, to the Principal Chaplain of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force: "Mr Grajewsky appears to me to be totally unfitted for the duty of C.F. by reason of his manner and lack of any necessary qualifications and I do not consider that his retention in that capacity is advisable. The men do not respect him and he carries no weight." Samuels strongly advised that he be demobilised as soon as possible. This did not affect his personal character, and Samuels believed him to have been mentioned in despatches, "but as a Senior Jewish Officer and in view of my experience as a Commanding Officer I consider Mr Grajewsky quite unfitted for the post of Jewish C.F. in the British Army." On 11 April 1919 the release of Grajewsky, at the age of about fifty-one, was sanctioned.

Whether this was influenced by what Samuels had written is not recorded.

Grajewsky had indeed been mentioned in despatches and, like Frankenthal, there is evidence that the men greatly respected him. Plainly Samuels had issues with Jewish identity in general and non-Anglicised Jewish chaplains in particular.

The "awkward situation in the Chaplaincy work" must have referred to Grajewsky and Frankenthal. What it actually was is not clear. By the time that Levin arrived, in around May 1919, Grajewsky had gone. Frankenthal made on its face a compelling justification for his activities, and identified inadequate enquiry by Levin and what may have been a selfish motive of Levin in disposing of Frankenthal in order himself

to remain as the Jewish chaplain. In the event Levin was only able to do so for a few months until March 1920.

9.29. January 1918. Rev. Leib Aizack Falk (31 January 1889 – 6 May 1957) and Chaplaincy in the Jewish Legion

On the streets of Britain apparently fit young men who were not in uniform risked being harangued as cowards and shirkers. There was much street antisemitism, and Jews with what were assumed to be German sounding names could be taken for enemy aliens. When conscription was introduced in 1916 it did not apply to up to thirty thousand Jews who had been born in Russia or to Russian immigrant parents in Britain and who had not taken British nationality.<sup>342</sup> This itself contributed to a rise in antisemitism. The Military Service Convention between Britain and Russia of 16 July 1917 forced these Jews to decide between returning to Russia to fight in the Russian Army and enlisting in the British Army with the assurance of British nationality after three months' service (or, as some did, of disappearing). This gave rise to vehement disagreement between Jews. Some Jews had been brought to Britain as infants and Russia meant nothing to them; some formed protest organisations against returning to Russia; others who had been political émigrés were enthusiastic for the new regime. Some British-born Jews, especially those who had lost sons in the war, resented Jews of Russian origin avoiding service in the British Army. Approximately four thousand Russian Jews returned to Russia, some with their families. In the chaos which engulfed Russia in 1917 most were never heard of again.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> Madigan and Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience: Panter, Between Inclusion and Exclusion*, p. 168; Smith, "The March of the Judeans", p. 207.

<sup>343</sup> Shukman, *War or Revolution*, esp. ch. 5. Cohen, *English Zionists*, p. 253.

For those Russian Jews who joined the British Army, there was sometimes the possibility of joining the all but entirely Jewish 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. The politics leading to the establishment of the Jewish Legion were complex. Essentially motivated by Zionism, its creation was opposed by most of the British Jewish leadership. To some young Russian Jews who had grown accustomed in Britain to street antisemitism and accusations of cowardice the prospect of serving with fellow Jews in a Jewish unit was attractive on social and religious grounds. For some of them the Zionist aspiration of participating in the liberation of the Holy Land was a powerful motivator, as also doubtless was the opportunity to serve anywhere other than the western front.

In the First World War, every other British Jewish chaplain (excepting Della Pergola, who did not serve in the field) ministered to Jewish soldiers as a small minority scattered throughout numerous units of the British Army. The role of Rev. Leib Aisack Falk was different. At the age of twenty-nine it fell to him to serve from 1918 until 1921 in Egypt and Palestine as the sole chaplain to what, albeit within the British Army, was an all but entirely Jewish fighting force, the Jewish Legion. It was reputedly the first Jewish fighting force to exist in over 1,700 years since the Bar-Kochba revolt in 135 CE <sup>344</sup>, and the first to participate in the liberation of the Holy Land and to soldier on its soil since the days of the Bible. Unlike the other chaplains,

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<sup>344</sup> Other than the Zion Mule Corps at Gallipoli in 1915, and possibly a Jewish fighting force in c. 500-550 CE in the wars between Byzantium and Islam. Also in 1794 Berek (Berko) Yoselovich is said to have organised a Jewish regiment in Poland as part of General Tadeusz Kosciuszko's Army in the Polish War to throw off the oppressive overlordship of the Russian Czar; the Regiment fought valiantly, but most of its soldiers fell in battle against the superior Russian onslaughts. Casper, *A Decade with South African Jewry*, pp. 15-18. Streeter, *Mad for Zion*, p. 89 n. 22. Brian, *The Seven Lives of Colonel Patterson*, p.85.

Falk did not need to locate and maintain contact with the members of a widely scattered and ever mobile network of Jewish soldiers and to negotiate services and facilities for them. But, as well as the issues faced by all military chaplains and the specific issues which confronted Jewish chaplains, Falk faced unique challenges, to which he had to find his own solutions.

When, early in the war, the Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers, Zionist leaders, notably Vladimir (later Ze'ev) Jabotinsky and Joseph Trumpeldor, realised that active Jewish support for the Allies would become an important factor in obtaining recognition of national Jewish status after the war. Their pressure led to the formation of the Zion Mule Corps (which was originally known as the Assyrian Refugee Mule Corps), an officially non-combatant service unit comprising principally Jews who had been exiled by the Ottomans from Palestine to Alexandria. Its commanding officer was Lt.-Col. John Henry Patterson, DSO (10 November 1867 – 18 June 1947), a fiery Irish Protestant, Boer War veteran, big game hunter, disciplinarian, philo-Semite and Zionist.<sup>345</sup> In 1915 the Corps with its mules served with distinction at Gallipoli, becoming for all practical purposes a combatant unit. Trumpeldor served as an officer in the Corps and as Patterson's deputy at Gallipoli. Shortly after the Gallipoli campaign the Corps was disbanded.<sup>346</sup>

The Jewish Legion was created in August 1917.<sup>347</sup> It came to comprise three battalions of the Royal Fusiliers. The 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion comprised essentially British

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<sup>345</sup> On Patterson, see Brian, *The Seven Lives of Colonel Patterson*, generally, and the works on the Jewish Legion cited in section 3.1.

<sup>346</sup> See, e.g., Keren and Keren, *We Are Coming, Unafraid*, pp. 5, 73, 113, 150. Chapter 7 deals with Falk. The book mentions in various of the notes on pp.176-178 that private papers of Falk are in the IDF (Israel Defence Force) Archive.

<sup>347</sup> The term "Jewish Legion" was never in fact an official term: Casper, *A Decade with South African Jewry*, pp. 15-18. Its formation was reported in *The Times* of 8/8/1917, reproduced on its centenary in *The Times* of 8/8/2017, p.24, as "The Jewish Corps".

volunteers, former members of the Zion Mule Corps and Russian Jews living in Britain, some of whom were forced into service by the Military Service Convention between Britain and Russia of 16 July 1917.<sup>348</sup> The 39<sup>th</sup> Battalion comprised essentially Jews from the United States, Canada and Argentina. The 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion comprised more than a thousand Palestinian Jews, together with ninety-two Turkish Jews who had been captured while fighting for the Ottoman Empire and had applied and been allowed to enlist. There was also a 42<sup>nd</sup> holding and training battalion based at Plymouth. The Jewish Legion also became known as the Jewish Battalion and the Judeans. In total it comprised some seven thousand men. It did not arrive in the Middle East until after General Allenby had taken Jerusalem in December 1917. It acquitted itself well in the battles for the Jordan Valley in 1918. However it was repeatedly side-lined and given inconsequential and laborious tasks, which was attributed by Patterson to prejudice against it within the E.E.F and to its being a sole regiment unintegrated into and so politically unshielded within any brigade. The Legion was disbanded in 1921.

Having commanded the Zion Mule Corps, Patterson commanded two years later the 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Jewish Legion.<sup>349</sup> In 1917 it was training at the regimental depot at Crown Hill Barracks near Plymouth Harbour. Falk was the minister of the Jewish community in Plymouth, and from March 1917 served as an officiating clergyman in Southern Command to Jewish troops in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset, conducting

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<sup>348</sup> Madigan and Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience: Smith, "The March of the Judeans"*, pp. 207-229. JVL, Martin Sugarman, *The March of the 38<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers – When the Spirit of Judah Macabee Hovered over the Whitechapel Road*.

<sup>349</sup> Jabotinsky, *The Story of the Jewish Legion*, pp. 151-156.

services for them in Plymouth and elsewhere.<sup>350</sup> Patterson approached him on 30 August to become the battalion chaplain.<sup>351</sup> Patterson later wrote:

I had for some time been making strenuous efforts to obtain the services of the Rev. L. A. Falk, the Acting Jewish Chaplain at Plymouth, as our spiritual guide, and luckily I was successful, for, at the last moment all difficulties were surmounted, and he joined us as we embarked. I had had many warnings from people who ought to have known better that he was not a suitable man for the post, but I had seen him and judged for myself, and I felt sure that he would suit my Jews from Russia much better than a Rabbi chosen because he was a Jew from England. His work and his example to others, during the whole time he served with us, were beyond all praise, and I often felt very glad, when he was put to the test of his manhood, that I had not listened to the voice of the croaker in England.<sup>352</sup>

To enable him to accept the proffered chaplaincy role, Falk prepared and submitted an application for naturalisation as a British subject,<sup>353</sup> and Jabotinsky sought for it to be accelerated.<sup>354</sup> The application was granted, and on 27 December 1917 Falk became a naturalised British subject. On 4 January 1918 he submitted his

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<sup>350</sup> Gluck, *A Tribute to my Great Grandfather*. Brian, *The Seven Lives of Colonel Patterson*, generally. Keren and Keren, *Chaplain with a Star of David*, pp.184 - 201 at p. 186. JC 28/5/1915. JC and JW references in this section are 28/5/1915 p. 19; 14/9/1917, p.25; 14/12/1917, pp. 12-13; 1/2/1918, p. 5; 8/2/1918, p. 16; 8/3/1918, pp. 6, 13; 6/9/1918, p. 16; 9/5/1919, p.16; 16/5/1919, p. 17; 11/7/1919, p. 13; 18/7/1919, p. 18; JW 2/6/1915, p. 13 (photograph); 12/5/1915, p. 25.

<sup>351</sup> University of Southampton, Special Collection MS 185, AJ 320 1/1, Papers of M.J.Landa. Falk Memoirs, 15/2/1929. *Journal of the Great Synagogue, Sydney*: September 1977, p. 14: Louise Rosenberg, *Rabbi's Falk's Four Years as Jewish Legion Chaplain*. JM, photographs and documents in boxes 201, 202.

<sup>352</sup> Patterson, *With the Judeans*, p.35.

<sup>353</sup> University of Cambridge, Special Collection ADD 8171, especially Box 4, Letters of Redcliffe Salaman, letter 7/10/1917.

<sup>354</sup> Jabotinsky Institute, at A1-2/7, 2712.

application for appointment as a temporary chaplain to the forces. It stated that he was an ardent Zionist worker and spoke English, Yiddish, other European languages and Hebrew, which was essential for the large number of Hebrew speaking troops in the 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Fusiliers. On 24 or 25 January 1918 Falk reported for duty at Crown Hill, and on 25 January he signed the formal offer to serve as a temporary chaplain fourth class in the rank of captain for twenty-four months.<sup>355</sup>

To try to serve as spiritual mentor to the mainly Russian-born Jews as well as to the “happy-go-lucky” English types, Falk stressed the consistency between the goal of Jewish national revival and England’s war aims, which included the conquest of Palestine, defining both tasks as providential.<sup>356</sup> Revolted by bayonet practice, from which “The struggle within me was intense”, he could not bring himself to preach to the men of their duties in time of war in the name of religion.<sup>357</sup> Rather he constantly reminded them of their mission:

In the remote past the Law went forth from Zion; happy are you that take it unto Zion, to establish in the Sacred Land the glories of our future. Be strong and of good courage, quit yourselves like men.<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> National Archives: HO/144/1485/351707, HO/334/81/2978 and naturalisation certificate A2978; War Office Officer’s File, WO/374/23512; Medal Card WO/372/7/12700.

<sup>356</sup> Keren and Keren, *Chaplain with a Star of David*, p.191; *We Are Coming, Unafraid*, p.113. Falk Memoirs, 22/3/1929, 5/4/1929.

<sup>357</sup> Falk Memoirs, 5/4/1929.

<sup>358</sup> Keren and Keren, *Chaplain with a Star of David*, pp.192, 195-196; *We Are Coming, Unafraid*, p.115, sourced to Falk Private Papers, Israel Defence Force Archive. Falk Memoirs, 17/5/1929 have this as a section of a longer message along the same lines from the Senior Jewish Chaplain Home Forces, Rev. S. Lipson, which Falk was directed to read at a Sabbath service whilst the Battalion was travelling through Italy.



The 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion included some Christian officers and NCOs and a few men, including two Lutherans.<sup>359</sup> Kosher meat was supplied, the Sabbath was the day of rest and Sabbath services were attended by the Colonel and all of the officers.<sup>360</sup> Chanukah 1917 was celebrated in the euphoria of the capture of Jerusalem by General Allenby's army. Chief Rabbi Hertz visited the Battalion,<sup>361</sup> as on Wednesday 5 December 1917 did Falk's mentor from Latvia, Rabbi Kook, who had found himself stranded in Britain during much of the First World War.<sup>362</sup>

As in 1914, one of the principal opponents of the Jewish Legion was Adler, who at a banquet in London in 1919 referred to it by the demeaning name of the "Jordan Highlanders", causing great resentment to the men of the Legion, who were still at war. Jabotinsky criticised Adler for instructing all of the Jewish chaplains in France to "preach that it was a shameful act to Jews to serve in our regiment", with the result that instead of thousands of transfers there were only several hundred, so that it took over four months, rather than the few weeks which it should have taken, to form even one battalion.<sup>363</sup> Falk later referred bitterly to Adler, commenting that "Like a gallant soldier he went forth to give battle to the protagonists of the Battalion. He sent a letter to the War Office where in strong terms he protested against the formation of the Jewish Units and even labelled the whole idea as 'irresponsible' ".<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> Patterson, *With the Judeans*, pp. 23, 72.

<sup>360</sup> Illustration 5.

<sup>361</sup> Falk Memoirs, 5/4/1929.

<sup>362</sup> University of Cambridge, Special Collection ADD 8171, especially Box 4, Letters of Redcliffe Salaman, letters 3/11/1917, 28/11/1917. Patterson, *With the Judeans*, p.25. Keren and Keren, *Chaplain with a Star of David*, pp. 194-195. JC 14/12/1917, pp.12-13.

<sup>363</sup> Jabotinsky, *The Story of the Jewish Legion*, p.101. Patterson, *With the Judeans*, p. 25. Watts, *The Jewish Legion*, pp. 117, 259. Gilner, *War and Hope*, pp. 111-112.

<sup>364</sup> *The Jewish Legion – Fiftieth Anniversary of the Jewish Battalions 1917-1967*, Jabotinsky Institute, at K1-28, p.3. Falk Memoirs, 15/2/1929. Keren and Keren, *Chaplain with a Star of David*, pp.187-188; *We Are Coming, Unafraid*, pp. 109-110.

Inevitably Falk's task was rendered more difficult by the opposition to the Jewish Legion. He endeavoured to obtain a Sefer Torah but without success, until as the 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion was embarking at Southampton at 5.00. p.m. on 5 February 1918 and the soldiers were already boarding, he was dramatically presented with one.<sup>365</sup> The battalion disembarked at Cherbourg, and then after rest periods made a series of train journeys across France and Italy. Falk suspended a blue and white Zionist flag from the window of his compartment on the train, which caused a German Jewish soldier in a nearby prisoner of war camp who saw it to call out in German "You are going to Palestine. I am also a Jew."<sup>366</sup> The battalion reached Taranto on 16 February and remained there for a week until they could sail to Alexandria. Falk and Patterson went into the town in search of a cabinetmaker and ordered an Ark of the finest wood for the Sefer Torah. At the Sabbath Parade the Sefer Torah was duly placed in the Ark with much ceremony. At 9.00.a.m. on 25 February the S.S. *Leasoe Castle* left Taranto harbour under the escort of three Japanese destroyers for the three day voyage to Alexandria. Purim was celebrated aboard ship. No submarine was encountered, and the ship arrived safely at Alexandria at dusk on 28 February. One soldier recorded:

Rev Falk, who was our Army Chaplain, managed to get hold of an Ark for our Sefer Torah, and in a speech to the Battalion by Colonel Patterson, [we] were assured that as long as we had the Ark with us no harm would come to us.

We embarked on the 25<sup>th</sup> on the 'Leasoe Castle' and arrived in Alexandria on

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<sup>365</sup> Patterson, *With the Judeans*, pp. 34-42 (re journey). Keren and Keren, *Chaplain with a Star of David*, p.189; *We Are Coming, Unafraid*, pp.111-112. Falk Memoirs, 3/5/1929.

<sup>366</sup> Watts, *The Jewish Legion*, pp. 151-152, 262 n. 39. Falk Memoirs, 10/5/1929.

the 28<sup>th</sup>, after an uneventful voyage. It is worthy of mention that on her very next voyage the 'Leasoe Castle' was torpedoed and sunk.<sup>367</sup>

The following day a service of welcome was held in the Synagogue in Alexandria. Chief Rabbi Raffaello Della Pergola, who three years earlier had acted as chaplain to Patterson's Zion Mule Corps, officiated and numerous notables attended. Rev. Frankenthal, gave an address of welcome. It was declaimed that "The Zion Mule Corps was our son, the Jewish Legion is our grandson".<sup>368</sup> The Battalion travelled on to Cairo, where a service was held, followed by a reception. Rabbi Shimon Bashi of Cairo composed an order of service to mark the moment at which the 38<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers would set foot in the Holy Land.<sup>369</sup>

On 11 March 1918 Falk wrote to Chief Rabbi Hertz in London. He reported that there were now weekly services in the camp, with voluntary services each day, Hebrew classes, lectures and a dramatic section in Hebrew. Words of command were given in Hebrew. Copies of *Jewish Thoughts* and *History of the Jews* had been distributed and were greatly appreciated. Falk appealed for books in Hebrew, Yiddish and English.<sup>370</sup> After protracted bureaucracy, ultimately involving a request from the Chief Rabbi, a large number of Jewish books were sent to Falk.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>367</sup> Keren and Keren, *Chaplain with a Star of David*, p. 190. Falk Memoirs, 17/5/1929.

<sup>368</sup> Jabotinsky, *The Story of the Jewish Legion*, p. 107. Falk Memoirs, 7/6/1929.

<sup>369</sup> Keren and Keren, *Chaplain with a Star of David*, p.192. Falk Memoirs, 21/6/1929.

<sup>370</sup> LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/001.

<sup>371</sup> University of Southampton, Special Collection MS 185, AJ320 1/2, Papers of M.J.Landa.

In Britain, the JWSC appointed Lipson to keep in contact with the Jewish Legion there.<sup>372</sup> He had already visited Crown Hill in November 1917.<sup>373</sup> In March 1918 he and Rev. H. Shandel of Ramsgate, the officiating clergyman for the Eastern Command, Kent, Sussex and Surrey, visited another battalion of the Jewish Legion for some days over the Sabbath and the festival of Purim.<sup>374</sup> Later at Passover some five hundred men of the 39<sup>th</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> Battalions including Captain Redcliffe Salaman attended the Seder service at Crown Hill, at which Sergeant Reuben chanted beautifully.<sup>375</sup> Despite his opposition to the formation of the Legion, Adler visited the Legion at Crown Hill from a Friday to a Monday in October 1918 and spoke of his experiences at the front.<sup>376</sup>

In Egypt the 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion encamped at Helmieh, a village near Cairo. Falk concerned himself with the welfare of the men in various ways, including assembling a library of books in various languages and forming a choir.<sup>377</sup> The battalion spent its first Passover there, managing to obtain food, wine, matzo and Haggadas. After a service in a marquee large enough for the whole Battalion which had been provided by the YMCA, each company held its Seder service in its own dining hut, led by a Jewish officer assisted by NCOs, with a whole staff of waiters from the Jewish hotel in Cairo in attendance. During the week of Passover the password was "Matzo" and

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<sup>372</sup> University of Southampton, Special Collection MS 185, AJ320 1/2, Papers of M.J.Landa.

<sup>373</sup> University of Cambridge, Special Collection ADD 8171, especially Box 4, Letters of Redcliffe Salaman, letter 12/11/1917.

<sup>374</sup> JC 8/3/1918, pp. 6, 13.

<sup>375</sup> University of Cambridge, Special Collection ADD 8171, especially Box 4, Letters of Redcliffe Salaman, letter 27/3/1918.

<sup>376</sup> JC 25/10/1918, p. 21.

<sup>377</sup> University of Southampton Special Collection MS 116/115, Egyptian Expeditionary Force Photos 1918-1919, photo of choir, perhaps including Falk, taken in Cairo, May 1918.

the answer "Passover". Falk also took a party of men to visit the Great Pyramid at Geiza.<sup>378</sup>

On 5 June the Battalion left Egypt for Palestine. Patterson wrote:

The Battalion entrained smoothly and quickly at the railway siding close to our camp and we were soon rolling onward to realize<sup>379</sup> our ideals and aspirations in the Promised Land.

Our Chaplain, who was a man of insight and vision, arranged that our trumpets should sound, and that a short prayer should be said by the troops as they entered, for the first time, the ancient land of their Fathers.<sup>380</sup>

The Battalion crossed the Sinai Desert by train in open trucks at night. Patterson observed that the funnel of the engine was belching forth a pillar of flame, which as dawn broke turned into a cloud of smoke, and noted the resonance with the Biblical narrative of the journey of the Children of Israel, led through the desert by a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night.<sup>381</sup> The Battalion passed Gaza and Ludd, detrained and marched to Sarafand, which was a village between Ludd and Jaffa where the British had established a large permanent army camp. It spent its first Sabbath, 8 June, in Palestine in Sarafand, where Falk arranged a formal service for the Battalion. Joyous at their arrival, many Jews from Jaffa and the neighbouring colonies, dressed in festive garb and some carrying banners, arrived to join them. Falk spoke of the historic significance of the moment.<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> Patterson, *With the Judeans*, p. 52. Jabotinsky, *The Story of the Jewish Legion*, p. 108. Falk Memoirs, 5/7/1929, 2/8/1929.

<sup>379</sup> Sic: the book was printed in the USA.

<sup>380</sup> Patterson, *With the Judeans*, p. 58.

<sup>381</sup> Shemot/Exodus, ch. 13, vv. 21-22.

<sup>382</sup> Patterson, *With the Judeans*, pp. 58-60. Falk Memoirs, 1/11/1929.

Within the 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion Falk had much correspondence with public and private Jewish agencies in England, Egypt and elsewhere, ordering kosher food, urging them to cater to soldiers' well-being and making enquiries about the condition of soldiers' families at home. "Falk performed Sabbath and holiday prayers, cared for the supply of Kosher food, ordered from Jewish merchants in Alexandria and elsewhere religious artefacts such as candles on Hannuka and Matzot on Passover, saw to it that Hebrew speaking nurses be available to care for the wounded, established a library in Hebrew, Yiddish and English, served as guide to the soldiers when they visited the pyramids in Egypt, the city of Jerusalem, and other locations, composed letters for soldiers, contacted their families and communities when they did not receive notice from home, and took care of a variety of other spiritual and religious needs." He was the censor for soldiers' letters written in Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian. Aware of the anxiety of some of the Russian-born soldiers that if they were killed or wounded there would be nobody to care for their families, he assured them that in deserving and urgent cases he would communicate with the Care Committee which had been established in London for the soldiers' wives and families. He wrote to London enquiring about the wife and child of a Private Levison, and received a reply of 14 January 1919 from the War Refugees Committee in London that the wife had died on 1 January and the child was being looked after by a man whose name and address in London were given.<sup>383</sup>

Jabotinsky was serving with the Judeans. Falk became his close friend and came to support the revisionist movement which he was found in 1925. However as an

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<sup>383</sup> Falk Memoirs, 8/3/1929, 4/10/1929. Keren and Keren, *Chaplain with a Star of David*, pp.188-189; *We Are Coming, Unafraid*, pp.109, 111. Jabotinsky Institute, at K1-14. JM, boxes 201, 202.

admirer of Great Britain he differed from the revisionists in hoping until 1948 that Palestine would become its seventh dominion, an aspiration which had influential supporters. Jabotinsky wrote:

Our padre was the Rev M. [sic] Falk, an enthusiastic ‘Mizrachi’, and himself a brave soldier under fire; and Colonel Patterson was compelled to learn all the laws and details of the shochet’s ritual, negotiating with the War Office and Portsmouth butchers about kosher meat, about veins and sinews and – I must stop, for while he knows the laws, I do not.<sup>384</sup>

The padre, Reverend Mr. Falk, held out bravely against the general attack of a whole regiment of skeptical [sic] lieutenants, who pleaded that being a Zionist had nothing to do with eating Kosher food. He stood like a rock by his principle. ‘It isn’t a question of eating. It is a principle that the Jew must always fight against all temptation, control and discipline himself at every step, and build a Zion of purity in his heart before building a Zion for his people’.<sup>385</sup>

One of these “sceptical lieutenants” was Horace Samuel, one of the officers of the 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Initially a Zionist, he became disillusioned with the Zionist project. In his “Unholy Memories of the Holy Land”, published “after a discreet interval” in 1930, he mocked what he termed the theatrical piety of Falk, who produced the Jewish national flag on every possible occasion and ostentatiously observed the dietary laws of Judaism. Despite Patterson’s efforts to ensure that the men had kosher food, Samuel recalled Jewish lines littered with bacon tins.<sup>386</sup> Falk wrote:

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<sup>384</sup> Jabotinsky, *The Story of the Jewish Legion*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>385</sup> Jabotinsky, *The Story of the Jewish Legion*, p.106.

<sup>386</sup> Pendlebury, *Portraying “the Jew”*, pp.162-164.

It fell to my sad duty as chaplain to bury nearly one hundred soldiers of the Jewish Battalions; their graves are to be found in every military cemetery up and down the Holy Land from Deir el-Beileh to Mount Scopus.<sup>387</sup>

The Battalion had a very difficult march through the Jordan Valley to Jericho. The Jordan Valley was torrid and malaria infested. As Patterson described it, the heat was intense and the dust was a foot deep, choking the men and sucking their feet down:

Those who did fall by the wayside were helped along by our Padre, the Rev L. A. Falk, who gave up his horse to the footsore and carried the pack and rifle of the weary, thus cheering them along into camp. This time it was the priest who proved the good Samaritan on the road to Jericho.<sup>388</sup>

Fighting as part of an all-Jewish unit raised profound religious questions on the nature and justifications of war. With little religious guidance to rely upon, Falk had to develop his own responses.<sup>389</sup> Facing the chaplain's inevitable dilemma of justifying killing, he did so in the instinct of individual and national self-preservation and in the need to end all wars.<sup>390</sup>

The anglicised Major Henry D. Myer (1892 – after 1968), who had served in France since mid- 1915 and been wounded at the Battle of Loos, was second in command of the 40<sup>th</sup> Fusiliers (with which Falk did not serve).<sup>391</sup> In September 1918 the battalion was in the Egyptian desert. Myer recorded in his memoir *Soldiering of Sorts*

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<sup>387</sup> Gluck, *A Tribute to my Great Grandfather*, p. 12.

<sup>388</sup> Patterson, *With the Judeans*, pp 86-87. Watts, *The Jewish Legion*, p.186.

<sup>389</sup> Keren and Keren, *We Are Coming, Unafraid*, p. 116.

<sup>390</sup> Keren and Keren, *Chaplain with a Star of David*, p. 194; *We Are Coming, Unafraid*, p.117

<sup>391</sup> On Myer, see Levene, *Two Jewish Memoirs*, ch. 4, pp. 81-114, incl. p. 103.



the Yom Kippur service on 15 September 1918. The evening of Yom Kippur begins in the synagogue with the haunting melody of *Kol Nidrei*. Myer wrote to his fiancée:

It is Yom Kippur. We have just had the Kol Nidrei service under the stars on the sand of the Desert. It was most impressive ... a really solemn Yom Kippur, grand in its simplicity.<sup>392</sup>

Also serving with the 40<sup>th</sup> Fusiliers was an American soldier called Benjamin Bronstein. In September 1918 he was present at the same Yom Kippur service. In 1968, half a century later, he wrote a memoir, based upon notes which he had made during the war, of his service. Of that Yom Kippur service he wrote:

We were thousands of miles away from home and our families, having in mind what we may confront in the future, we were overwhelmed with sadness when the chasen began chanting the Kol Nidrei service, there was not a dry eye in the assembly.<sup>393</sup>

In 1918 an assault by the 39<sup>th</sup> Fusiliers (with which Falk did not serve) on a strategically located village in the Jordan Valley began on the same evening of 15 September 1918, the start of Yom Kippur. A soldier, Elias Gilner, recorded:

At sundown on September 15, 1918, the eve of the Day of Atonement, when Jews throughout the world gather to pray and to seek forgiveness for their transgressions, the 39<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers was ordered to put on full pack and equipment and to march to the front. The men stepped out northward towards Wadi Aouja and were told to march in silence. But soon Turkish shells fell and exploded in the thick, soft dust.

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<sup>392</sup> Myer, *Soldiering of Sorts*, pp. 2, 120, 192.

<sup>393</sup> Keren and Keren, *We Are Coming, Unafraid*, pp.135, 139-140.

Since the enemy was clearly aware of their presence there, Private [Chaim Baruch] Berezin, who had been a cantor in New Jersey, decided to ignore the order of silence and began to chant the Kol Nidrei, soon groups of Legionnaires joined in and the strangest Kol Nidrei service ever heard resounded through the valley of death. The mournful tune which the martyred Marranos had surreptitiously intoned in subterranean synagogues was now chanted in the face of an oppressor; it mingled with the howls of jackals and was accompanied by the rhythmic tramp of marching feet. Some of the men wept quietly, smearing the desert dust over their faces as they tried to wipe their tears away.<sup>394</sup>

Berezin himself recorded:

On Monday, the eve of Yom Kippur, we were told to be ready to move on, that is, to the trenches in the hills. That evening, precisely when the rest of the world was saying Al Khet and Kol Nidrei, we marched bravely out. It was unusually dusty – over our knees. In a very short time, we were white as lime. Even when I had no strength I kept on singing our Kol Nidrei, as a cry for help to our Master of the Universe, to wake Him up from His ancient slumber and to let Him know that we were the first Jewish volunteers to spill their blood for the revival of the Jewish people.

It seems that He heard my cry for help! ...<sup>395</sup>

Captain Redcliffe Nathan Salaman was the Regimental Medical Officer of the 39<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers, with whom he served under Colonel Margolin from April 1918 until

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<sup>394</sup> Keren and Keren, *We Are Coming, Unafraid*, p. 66.

<sup>395</sup> The narrative continues about how the march proceeded and Berezin survived. Keren and Keren, *We Are Coming, Unafraid*, pp. 51, 66.

May 1919. A doctor and plant geneticist with health problems and a restless and unfulfilled personality to whom the campaign was, his wife said, his great adventure, he had supported Patterson in the negotiations leading to the creation of the Jewish Legion.<sup>396</sup> He participated in the same march as Gilner and Berezin, and described it graphically.<sup>397</sup>

In Britain an American Jewish soldier who was training in Plymouth in November 1918 recorded in his diary, written in Yiddish, which does not contain his name, services conducted by Major William Shonfield, the deputy commander of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Holding Battalion at Plymouth and by visiting Rev. Major Lipson.<sup>398</sup>

The authorities were satisfied with Falk's performance of his duties. On 13 January 1919, after Falk had been in post for a year, the Principal Chaplain of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, E. R. Day, wrote in his report on him that "This Chaplain ministers to the 38<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers and other Jewish battalions and I understand is diligent in his ministrations". On 15 June 1920, by which time Falk's two year appointment had already expired, Day accepted Falk's formal offer to renew his contract for up to twelve months. In October 1920 Falk hospitalised in Lydd with pyrexia and clinical malaria<sup>399</sup>, whence on 6 November he was transferred to a

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<sup>396</sup> University of Cambridge, Special Collection ADD 8171, especially Box 4, Letters of Redcliffe Salaman, letter 6/8/1917. Salaman was a doctor, plant geneticist, social historian of the potato, country gentleman and Zionist and served as President of the Jewish Historical Society of England. Describing him in a lecture in 2014 as "The Last Anglo-Jewish Gentleman", Endelman has written about him in Endelman, *Radical Assimilation*, pp. 73-113, and in *Anglo-Jewish Scientists and the Science of Race in Jewish Social Studies*, New Series, vol.11, no. 1 (Autumn 2004), pp. 52-92. Endelman was reported to be working on a biography of Salaman.

<sup>397</sup> Salaman, *Palestine Reclaimed*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>398</sup> Keren and Keren, *We Are Coming, Unafraid*, pp. 25, 34 - 40.

<sup>399</sup> Forces War Records, citing National Archives file MH 106/788, records of no. 34 Combined Clearing Hospital, Jerusalem, from 5/6/1918 to 25/2/1919 (although this sub-file is not in the National Archives Discovery catalogue).

hospital in Ismailia and thence to another in Kantara, from which he was discharged on 19 November.

Falk's wife Fanny and two children joined him in Palestine, no doubt at some point after the Armistice of November 1918. Falk attempted to remain in Palestine as part of the British military administration but, even with the support in a letter of 30 December 1920 of the Zionist Commission to Palestine, his request was refused.<sup>400</sup> Fanny's health impelled a return to Britain, and on 10 January 1921 the family embarked at Port Said for the UK, arriving on 25 January. Falk was released from the army with effect from that day, which was three years to the day from when he had reported for duty. For his service he was mentioned in despatches.<sup>401</sup>

### 9.30. Officiating Clergymen

The British Army had long supplemented its small cadre of commissioned chaplains by relying heavily on the services of civilian garrison chaplains and officiating clergymen. With the outbreak of the First World War men began to be recruited and trained throughout the country. So ministers of religion around the country were appointed as officiating clergymen, sometimes referred to as Assistant Chaplains.

In September 1914 the *Jewish Chronicle* and the *Jewish World* published a letter from the War Office of 4 September to commanding generals throughout the UK listing the clergymen whom Reverend M. Adler had nominated to represent him in Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Dublin, Glasgow and Leeds.<sup>402</sup> By March 1915 nine Jewish officiating clergymen had been appointed, based in Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Birmingham, Ramsgate, Aldershot, Portsea and for

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<sup>400</sup> Jabotinsky Institute, at K1-14.

<sup>401</sup> Falk family correspondence.

<sup>402</sup> JC 11/9/1914, p. 13. JW 16/9/1914, p. 19.

Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. As time went on other officiating clergymen were appointed, several in London and in Dublin, Cardiff, Scotland, for Eastern Command and for Bedford, Northampton and Huntingdon.

### 9.31. Labour Battalions

During the First World War nearly three quarters of a million men of many nationalities served in the Labour Corps of the British Army. Non-indigenous men, including non-white labour from overseas and Russian Jews, were widely considered of inferior military capability and more suited to employment in labour battalions.

During the period of voluntary enlistment recruits were entitled to request non-combatant service. The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Labour Battalions were formed especially for all-Russian labour companies. The battalions were based in the UK and some of their companies served in France.

In the summer of 1918 several hundred men of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion were stationed in Wales. The Jewish officiating clergyman in Cardiff, Rev. H. Jerevitch, appealed in the *Jewish Chronicle* on their behalf, and substantial sums were raised in response within the Jewish communities in Cardiff and Merthyr.<sup>403</sup> By contrast, Russian Jews in the 8<sup>th</sup> Labour Battalion at Wilderness Camp in Sevenoaks complained to the Chief Rabbi that they were never visited by Jewish ministers and that “you, who have advocated our being in this position, ought to do more for us than simply preach patriotism”. They said that local Christians had given them more support than the Jewish community.<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> JC 23/8/1918, p.10.

<sup>404</sup> LMA, ACC /2805/4/4/12, Private Glassman, 8<sup>th</sup> Labour Battalion, to Chief Rabbi Hertz, 11/8/1918. Lloyd, *Jews under Fire*, pp. 215-221.

### 9.32. Conclusion

When their service began Freedman was aged 41, Levin 45, Adler 46, Grajewsky about 47 and Goldston and Price 53. Goldston lost his son Lionel and Geffen his son Ernest in the war. Adler had a son, Sidney, who was wounded.<sup>405</sup> The twenty British and the three Australian Jewish chaplains personified in microcosm some of the most contentious issues within British Jewry during the First World War.

The one matter which did not become an issue was religiosity. In September 1914 Adler appointed the Reform minister Phillips as officiating clergyman to the Jewish soldiers in Manchester, without reference and to the irritation of the Chief Rabbi. Simmons was also a minister of the Reform denomination, whilst all of the other chaplains were Orthodox ministers. As Senior Jewish Chaplain Adler supported him throughout, conducted at least two joint services with him<sup>406</sup> and recommended him for a mention in despatches. When Simmons was forcefully criticised by a seemingly Orthodox officer for leading men away from tradition, Adler, far from adopting an Orthodox position, defended him as one of his chaplains. Within the community at large, the response was different; Simmons was castigated for advocating in December 1916 a departure from tradition and an accommodation with modernity. Two years later, in February 1919, the Orthodox minister Barnett provoked virtually no response for publicly advocating much the same thing.

The recruiting advertisements placed by the Jewish community encouraged Jews to join any unit of the Army. Very early in the war the idea emerged of all-Jewish unit.

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<sup>405</sup> Sidney Michael Adler served in the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers (London Regiment), initially from 10 May 1914 and on active service from 14 April 1915, rising to the rank of captain. He was twice wounded, on 24 October 1915 and on 24 July 1916, and was commended for home war service. National Archives, medal card WO372/1/25089. Forces War Records.

<sup>406</sup> Sections 9.10. and 9.27.2.

This issue became the wartime touchstone of Jewish integration into British life. There were various arguments in its favour, including facilitating religious observance of the Sabbath and festivals and of kashrut. An Orthodox minister might have been expected to be swayed by that argument. Not so Adler, then the only chaplain, who vigorously opposed the proposal, using and arguably abusing his position to take his arguments directly to the War Office. Three years later he was equally forceful in opposing the creation of the Jewish Legion, ridiculing it publicly and discouraging soldiers from taking the opportunity to apply to transfer into it. Perhaps with little option once it became a reality, he did however spend time in camp with it. By contrast the idea of an all-Jewish fighting force was strongly supported by the Lithuanian born Falk and the English born Lipson.

Adler was cast in the heroic mould of a heroic age. For him Jews demonstrated their loyalty to their "host" country by integrating into units within the Army, where antisemitism was all but unknown and not tolerated and Jews inevitably won respect for proudly affirming their Jewish identity. This wishful, panglossian, even delusional, thinking contrasted with the more realistic assessment by Barnett of the Jewish anaesthesia which the war had induced, typified by the preference of Jewish soldiers for the prohibited food which many had never tasted at home and the consequent embarrassment which this caused to the Jewish chaplains, and with the observation by Freedman of many Jews within Australian and British armies concealing their Jewish identity for fear of prejudice.

Overall I have encountered relatively little evidence of antisemitism within the British armed forces. This contrasts with the position in the German Army, in which antisemitism was a constant presence, increasing significantly after 1916 as the fortunes of war turned. German Jews had more difficulty than others in gaining

promotion, including to officer status, although Jewish soldiers were well treated in relation to religious services in the field and leave for Jewish festivals. Popular suspicion in Germany that Jews were serving in disproportionately small numbers and the traditional antisemitism of the Prussian officer corps within the Prussian War Ministry led to the *Judenzählung* of October 1916. When this census proved inconclusive it was not published, which facilitated the post-war perpetuation of the claim that Jews had been under-represented in the military.<sup>407</sup> There was never any analogous census in the Austro-Hungarian army. In Britain some harboured the same suspicion that Jews were under-represented in the army but, perhaps supporting the Endelman/Feldman thesis, the idea of such a census would have been unthinkable, even without by that stage the presence of several serving Jewish chaplains.

The issue of Zionism was toxic. Like many within the British Jewish establishment, Adler was anti-Zionist, and it took a visit to Palestine in 1928 to change his mind. Falk, by contrast was a religiously inspired Zionist who rejected secular Zionism and grasped the epochal opportunity for a Jewish army to liberate and redeem the Land of Israel. Yet, with his own intense patriotism to his adoptive country of Britain, he differed from his Zionist mentor, Jabotinsky, in seeing this as integrated within the national identity of Jews as citizens of Britain, Australia and the United States, rather than as a separate Palestinian Jewish identity. Adler and doubtless others of the chaplains opposed Zionism, whilst Brodie and Levy supported it, as did Chief Rabbi

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<sup>407</sup> Madigan and Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience: Wiens, A Mixed bag of Loyalties: Jewish Soldiers, Ethnic Minorities, and State-Based Contingents in the German Army, 1914-1918*, pp. 137-158. Appelbaum, *Loyal Sons*, esp. pp. 296-300.



Hertz. Having lived in Jerusalem, Frankenthal was probably a religious Zionist and Grajewsky certainly was.

Many of the chaplains were English born ministers cast in the English mould. They included Adler, Barnett, Brodie, Goldstone, Hirsch, Levin, Levine, Lieberman, Morris, Price and Silverman, as well as many of the officiating clergymen. To anglicised officers from the upper echelons of society with often limited Jewish knowledge and religious observance, these ministers were viewed as religious functionaries and did not pose a challenge. Other ministers, from a different background, did. Grajewsky, although partially educated in England, and Frankenthal, who never lived there, were not cast in the English mould and did not carry a patina of Englishness. Both were abusively castigated by the assimilated and anglicised Colonel Samuels, who felt embarrassed by them. Frankenthal was also vigorously and comprehensively criticised by the anglicised Levin. The criticisms were inevitably based upon hearsay, and Levin may have had a personal motive.

For more independent spirits, Australia held an allure. Of the Australian chaplains, Freedman had gone there from Britain in 1897, Danglow in 1905 and Cohen in 1906. Brodie, Falk, Hirsch, Levine and Levy went there at different stages after the war. Probably their motives were a combination of limited ministerial opportunities in Britain and the opportunity to escape from the heavy-handed control of the Orthodox religious establishment in Britain to the virtual autonomy of an emerging, independently minded and far away Australia. The issue of Zionism remained divisive in Australia for many years, contributing to rifts between ministers. Cohen,

Danglow and Boas opposed Zionism, although Danglow later embraced it, whilst Brodie, Falk and Levy supported it.<sup>408</sup>

After the war Silverman gravitated from Orthodoxy to the Reform movement, and from Britain to New York and Jamaica. Liebermann and Morris both left the ministry to become solicitors. Several of the ministers went on to serve in the Second World War as chaplains or officiating clergymen, Gollop and then Brodie as Senior Jewish Chaplain.

British Jewish chaplaincy in the First World War largely centred upon Adler. During the Second World War the geography of the war rendered it much more decentralised. In the First, Adler was the prime mover throughout. He fought to be allowed to serve in the field, opening the way for the gradual appointment of eighteen more Jewish field chaplains. Without his initiative, there might not have been British Jewish chaplains in the field at all; if there had been, they would probably have arrived later than the earlier appointees did, and might have remained civilians, as they did in Germany. Barnett's assessment of Adler's achievement as a *creatio ex nihilo* was justified.

Like others who, as Barnett appreciated, create rather than record history, Adler was single minded in his convictions. In the early months of the war it plainly did not occur to him that he might be taking too much upon himself in seeking to speak virtually for the Jewish community in opposing the creation of a Jewish unit. He fought to be allowed to take his conception of chaplaincy to the battlefields and to the front. In 1917 he maintained his principled opposition to the creation of a Jewish unit. He refused to endorse the recommendation of Geffen for a decoration because he

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<sup>408</sup> AJHS, 1995, Apple, *The Jewish military chaplaincy in Australia*, pp. 723-730.

had not yet received one himself. He even undid the goodwill of a friendly conversation with a private soldier by returning in his car to insist upon a salute. For him the chaplaincy was everything, and he refused to allow it to be undermined by denominational considerations, even dissenting from the Chief Rabbi.

On probably his most controversial decision, about the Australian Passover arrangements in 1917, Adler could not see Freedman's position, nor did he consider drawing back from overriding Freedman's authority. He said that he had received letters from other Jewish soldiers protesting the unfairness of the arrangements for the Anzacs alone; but these are unlikely to have been many and his conviction was clearly his own. To have taken the issue to the Australian commanding general must, whatever the outcome, have served to prejudice his relationship with Freedman and to undermine Freedman's standing in the eyes of hundreds of Jewish soldiers from Australia and New Zealand, whose troops were characterised by a robust independence and a less than British deference to authority. Adler was hurt by the criticism in London of his decision, and was probably unable to understand it.

From the age of 46 Adler spent more than three years on the Western front, with only short home leaves. When on leave, with no wife to comfort and counsel him, he had to contend with committees who considered him accountable to them and of whose lack of understanding of the realities of existence in the field he must have despaired. Even if not in the front line for all of the time, he was never far from trauma, mutilation and death. Nobody returned from the war unmarked by their experiences. Adler was a product of his time. Yet he was an innovator, with a single-minded vision which he transformed into a reality and which influenced all of his judgements. He created a Jewish military field chaplaincy, which came to be emulated within the Empire and in the United States. Passing away in September

1944, Adler lived to see that by the time of the Second World War his vision of British Jewish chaplaincy in the field had become normative.

Exemplifying the thesis of Endelman and Feldman of the gradualism of British Jewish integration<sup>409</sup>, the development of Jewish chaplaincy was incremental and experimental. At various points the authorities declined to make appointments requested by the Jewish community. The only point at which they took the initiative was in the militarily critical summer of 1917, when they requested the appointment of two chaplains for France in June and may then have been more pro-active until the summer of 1918. That apart, the initiatives came entirely from the Jewish community: its establishment bodies and individuals, including Adler, the complaints by soldiers of the lack of chaplains and in the case of the Jewish Legion its Zionist supporters. Of these the seminal initiative was Adler's at the outset of the war to serve in the field.

"Unofficial chaplaincy", conducted by people who were not commissioned chaplains or ministers of religion serving as officiating clergymen, cannot be assessed by any empirical measure. There were never enough ministers of religion, nor from the modestly sized Jewish community, with a large and still insufficiently anglicised immigrant element, could there possibly have been. There is much evidence of services regularly conducted at numerous locations within Britain by laymen, both civilians and officers and soldiers of all ranks, as well as by ministers of religion. Whilst stationed in Britain many soldiers were content to absent themselves from religious services. On active service abroad, however, many made enormous and sometimes courageous and exhausting efforts to attend services. Many rarely if ever

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<sup>409</sup> Section 6.3.

encountered a Jewish chaplain. Some were content, even enthusiastic, to take the unprecedented opportunity to desist from Jewish practice and within the conformist military environment not to stand out from their fellow soldiers. Others made efforts, some of which may fairly be termed heroic, to do whatever they could, however modest, to adhere to their Judaism. Of unofficial chaplaincy I have encountered numerous diverse instances. There must have been innumerable others, unrecorded and irretrievable. I think it fair to say that in the First World War the unofficial variant was a significant element of British Jewish military chaplaincy.

## 10. THE INTERWAR PERIOD

### 10.1. Rev. Michael Adler

The Armistice was declared on 11 November 1918. Adler had begun work compiling a statement of the full part played by British Jews during the war, and appealed for information and photographs.<sup>1</sup> On 6 April 1919 a symposium was held in London on “The Jewish Soldier and His Religion”. Speakers included Revs. Levin, Lipson, Morris and Danglow and Lieutenant Boas. From their experiences they challenged the view of another speaker that Jewish soldiers had become apathetic towards organised religion. The chaplains had seen both great disregard of and great attachment to Jewish observances by Jewish soldiers. They discussed the difficulties which they had faced of locating widely dispersed Jewish soldiers without having any transport facilities and their role as a link between soldiers and their homes.<sup>2</sup>

In Britain antisemitism intensified from 1916 and even more strongly into the post-war years. From wartime accusations of Jewish shirking, profiteering and want of patriotism, it assumed a more political aspect, challenging not only the loyalty and commitment of British Jewry but its very Englishness. In June 1919 the JWSC published, at the price of one penny, a booklet written by Adler entitled *The Jews of the Empire and the Great War*. Introduced by a stirring poem of the patriotism of British Jews for Britain, it discussed enthusiastic voluntary enlistment, chaplains, the work of the JWSC and two hospitals, one opened for Jews and the other staffed by Jews. It described the courageous deeds of the five Jews who had been awarded the Victoria Cross and of others and the Jewish units – the Zion Mule Corps and the 38<sup>th</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> JC 29/11/1918, p. 20; 20/12/1918, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> JC 11/4/1919, p.14. Adler had innovated this role: section 9.8.

40<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers. Drawing a veil over his own subversion of the proposal, Adler wrote:

In the early part of the War, the War Office gave facilities for an attempt to be made to enlist Jews to serve together in units on the principle of 'Pals' Battalions which were so popular in some of the provincial cities, but the result was not a success.<sup>3</sup>

The monumental *British Jewry Book of Honour*, a vast compilation by Adler of British and Imperial Jewish endeavours in the Great War, was published in 1922. It provided irrefutable and powerful proof of the commitment and patriotism of British Jewry, which had been continually called into question during the war and continued to be questioned with even more malice after it.<sup>4</sup> Gisela Lebzelter wrote that latent prejudice against Jews surfaced after the First World War, subsided during the years of increasing stability and prosperity during the second half of the 1920s, reappeared during the crisis of the early 1930s and reached its climax in 1935-6 when it became the principal propaganda instrument of the British Union of Fascists. However antisemitism failed to become a relevant political force because of its lack of historical tradition in England and, with little ostentatious élitist support, its lack of respectability.<sup>5</sup>

When Barnett was demobilised in August 1920 Adler continued as the Acting Jewish Chaplain in the Territorial Force.<sup>6</sup> In October 1920 there was a reunion of the Jewish

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<sup>3</sup> Adler, *The Jews of the Empire and the Great War*.

<sup>4</sup> Adler, *The Jews of the Empire and the Great War*. BJBH. Madigan and Reuveni (eds.), *The Jewish Experience: Madigan, Thou Hast Given Us Home and Freedom, Mother England*, pp. 307-333.

<sup>5</sup> Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism in England 1918-1939*, pp. 172-174.

<sup>6</sup> VC/2/generally.

chaplains. Ten of the eighteen attended, and tributes were paid to Adler.<sup>7</sup> In November 1920 the Cenotaph in London was unveiled. Chief Rabbi Hertz was on a pastoral visitation to the Dominions, so Adler represented him at the unveiling.<sup>8</sup>

Established in 1917, the Imperial War Graves Commission consulted Adler in 1919 about Jewish gravestones and created a design comprising a Magen David emblem bearing within it the four Hebrew letters which are traditional for a tombstone. As the work of laying out cemeteries in France and Belgium began, large numbers of bodies were exhumed from where they lay and reinterred in the new cemeteries. In April 1920 Adler suggested to the IWGC that the appropriate prayer from the burial service in the Jewish Prayer Book be distributed to relevant officers for use if no Jewish chaplain was available, and the IWGC duly passed this suggestion to the War Office.<sup>9</sup> One of the decisions which fell to be made by the IWGC was that in war cemeteries Jewish soldiers would be buried not in separate Jewish sections but alongside everybody else. Adler was consulted on the debate which led to this decision, upon which there were some strong contrary views within the Jewish community.<sup>10</sup>

In November 1920 Adler initiated correspondence with the IWGC for him to tour the battlefields to report on Jewish graves and to read the burial service over bodies which were exhumed for reburial. In June 1921 the London Chevra Kadisha appealed in the Jewish press for funds. This enabled Adler, at the age of fifty-three, to tour the battlefield cemeteries. Published in October 1921, his report recorded that he motored hundreds of miles and lived amid the ruins of devastated areas. Of

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<sup>7</sup> JC 15/10/1920, p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> LMA, ACC/2805/04/05/016.

<sup>9</sup> CWGC/1/1/7/B/43 (also termed WG 1294/3 pt.2).

<sup>10</sup> CWCG/1/2/A/438 (also termed A98).



nearly two thousand cemeteries in France and Belgium, he visited one hundred and thirty which contained anything between one and thirty-one Jewish graves. He also encountered many German Jewish graves. In every cemetery he held a brief memorial service. The cemeteries were being laid out and new tombstones being fashioned and erected. Some of the original grave memorials of Jewish soldiers had been destroyed or damaged, and Adler discovered that as bodies were brought in for reburial mistakes in identification were being made, of which he made a list for the IWGC. He re-erected some twenty original Jewish grave memorials pending the erection of tombstones, and from the inscription on a grave marker was able to identify a Jewish soldier whose grave had been marked as unknown.<sup>11</sup>

The religion of a soldier being laid to rest was not always clear. In April 1922 the IWGC agreed to accept a man as a Jew on the strength of Adler's list of Jews who had served if the IWGC's files did not show his religion.<sup>12</sup> In 1922 a religiously observant father travelled from Australia to Britain in order to request that the Jewish name of his son, Captain Roy Hector Blashki, who had been mentioned in despatches and had been killed on 3 August 1917, appear in Hebrew characters on his tombstone. The Commission was resistant on pragmatic grounds, and invited Chief Rabbi Hertz to attend its meeting on Tuesday 23 May 1922 to present the case. Accepting the Commission's position that on grounds of equality of treatment the Hebrew name could not appear above the Magen David, the Chief Rabbi argued for it to be within the text of the personal inscription, whose cost was usually borne by the next of kin. The Commission feared setting a precedent, and the Chief Rabbi

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<sup>11</sup> VC/2/generally. CWGC/1/1/5/31 (also termed WG66). JC 7/10/1921, pp. 17, 18. *Jewish Guardian* 7/10/1921, p.22.

<sup>12</sup> CWGC/1/1/5/31 (also termed WG66).

said that if the application were granted he would not take any steps to make the decision generally known. The Commission acceded to the request.<sup>13</sup> Other similar requests nevertheless followed, and the principle came to be accepted. In 1923 and 1924 the Office of the Chief Rabbi approved a number of requests for Hebrew names and inscriptions for Jewish graves and supplied full size drawings of them with, as was required, an exact translation. On occasion, as with Able Seaman H. Rosen in January 1923, it also arranged for the Cross which had been erected over a grave to be replaced by a Jewish Memorial.<sup>14</sup>

In 1922, being aged over fifty, Adler transferred at his own suggestion from the active to the reserve list of Territorial chaplains, although he retained charge of the work for the regular Army, Navy and Air Force.<sup>15</sup> He retained the title of Senior Jewish Chaplain until 1926, when he resigned on 15 October, apparently because he had expected to serve on the Military Service Committee, although it seems that the committee did not include any chaplaincy representation. At his request he retained responsibility for matters relating to the IWGC. The Deputy-Chaplain General, Owen S. Watkins, wrote to him on 15 October 1926:

It is with regret that your resignation is accepted. We all recognise the great service you have rendered during the past twenty-three years, especially during the dark days of the Great War. You have brought the Jewish Community into close touch with His Majesty's Land Forces, as I believe to your advantage and ours. May I express, on behalf of the Chaplain General

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<sup>13</sup> Minutes of Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission 23/5/1922. Dapin, *Jewish Anzacs*, pp. 129-130, 362.

<sup>14</sup> LMA, ACC/2805/04/05/014.

<sup>15</sup> VC/2/generally.

and the whole Royal Army Chaplains' Department, our very sincere and heartfelt thanks.<sup>16</sup>

As fascism grew in the 1930s, Adler was called upon to continue his work of memorialising the contribution of Britain's Jews in the Great War. He responded to an antisemitic article in a German newspaper with an article entitled *The truth about the British Jews at the front in the Great War*.<sup>17</sup> Responding to hostile and fascist attacks, he worked with the Board of Deputies of British Jews to reissue the pamphlet entitled *The Jews of the Empire and the Great War*.<sup>18</sup> He was the author of an undated four page booklet, also produced in conjunction with the Board of Deputies, entitled *What the Jews of the British Empire did in the Great War – Read and learn the True Facts*. It stated:

Here are the facts based upon official records, compiled and set forth in the 'British Jewry Book of Honour' by the Senior Jewish Chaplain to H. M. Forces, the Rev. Michael Adler, D.S.O., and his brother Chaplains, who accompanied the Armies in France, Belgium, Italy, Gallipoli, Salonika, Palestine, East and West South Africa. These facts completely demolish the lies so assiduously spread by British Fascists as to British Jewry's part in the war.<sup>19</sup>

Adler retired from the Central Synagogue in 1934 after thirty-one years' service. H.M. Forces Committee had been formed in 1927 as a sub-committee of the Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue, with Adler as one of its members. In 1936 he decided to resign from it through ill health. The committee prevailed upon him to

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<sup>16</sup> JM, file 2011.74.

<sup>17</sup> LMA, ACC/2805/04/01/006.

<sup>18</sup> LMA, ACC/3121/B/04/A/006.

<sup>19</sup> LMA, ACC/3121/G/06/037. I have not been able to identify any chaplaincy activity in South Africa.

withdraw his resignation, on the basis that he need only attend meetings when his health permitted and, much touched by its wish, he agreed to do so.<sup>20</sup>

Adler died on 30 September 1944 at the age of 76. Barnett in a memorial address<sup>21</sup> and chaplain Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz in a commemoration address<sup>22</sup> spoke of his chaplaincy achievement. In 1946 Barnett wrote:

If Michael Adler were, himself, asked what he considered to be the best work of his life he would have unhesitatingly replied: 'The Army Chaplaincy'. And nobody who knew him as the Jewish Padre could but agree that no task that he ever attempted was better done than this. Again it was pioneer work. At the outbreak of the First World War he was the only Jewish Chaplain to have held His Majesty's Commission in the Army. He was faced now with the tremendous task of organising an adequate Jewish Chaplaincy for work in the field as well as at home. The peculiar problems of the Jewish Servicemen scattered in almost every army unit were well-nigh insurmountable. In addition, the War Office was at a loss to know what to do with a Jewish Chaplain in the field and refused to allow Adler to go overseas. It was only his persistence and tenacity which finally overcame the objection, and in January 1915, for the first time in the history of the British Army, a Jewish Chaplain was ministering to Jewish troops in the field. But a disagreeable surprise awaited him. On arrival at the base Adler was confronted with a letter from the Army Council which ordered him 'on no account to venture beyond the lines of communication'. Again it was only his indomitable will, his refusal to capitulate

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<sup>20</sup> VC/5/40-45.

<sup>21</sup> Anderson, *All the A's*. JC 6/10/1944, pp. 3, 6; 20/10/1944, p. 13.

<sup>22</sup> JC 3/11/1944, p. 5.

to frustration and obstruction, that enabled him to surmount disabilities. He was not the man to be content with the job of 'carpet-chaplain'. He made his way to G.H.Q. – and the Army Council's letter was torn up. That was how he began. It is not possible here to continue the story of how he built up the Jewish Chaplaincy during the War. Suffice it to say that it was a *creatio ex nihilo*. With no precedent to guide him, with nothing but his own forcefulness of purpose and growing experience, he organized the department with such efficiency that before the war was over he had received promotion in rank, a two-fold mention-in-despatches and the signal honour of the D.S.O. He was indefatigable in his energies, infectious in his enthusiasm, dynamic in his influence on his colleagues, and impressive in his devotion to the Jewish soldier's well-being. Many thousands of Jews will remember him with gratitude and honour. During those tragic years he made Jewish history rather than investigated it.<sup>23</sup>

Barnett, whom Adler had selected and prepared as his successor, knew better than anybody of Adler's endeavours. His assessment was accurate. He might have added that much of the memorialisation of the Jewish military contribution to the Allied war effort was attributable to the initiative of Adler.

## 10.2. The Interwar Years

After the First World War the responsibility for matters military reverted to the Visitation Committee, and in 1920 the Admiralty and the Air Ministry wrote to it recognising its role. In May 1920 there were discussions with the War Office whether

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<sup>23</sup> *The Rev. Michael Adler, D.S.O., S.C.F., B.A. (1868-1944)* in JHS, vol. 15, 1939-1945, pp. 191-194. JC 23/7/1943, p. 9. Also obituaries: *The Times* 2/10/1944; JC 6/10/1944, p. 6.

there should be a permanent Jewish chaplaincy or reliance upon officiating clergymen. In August 1920 the Visitation Committee advised the War Office that there were some 400 Jewish soldiers serving in the UK, as well as 25 in the RAF.<sup>24</sup> War Office returns showed 293 known Jewish soldiers in 1920 and 270 in 1921. There proved to be too few Jewish soldiers at any one centre to merit payments for ministrations by officiating clergymen. At the beginning of every year orders were issued by each of the Admiralty, the War Office and the Air Ministry listing the dates throughout the year for which, subject to the exigencies of service, leave was to be granted on request for Jewish festivals, with remission of labour commencing at sunset on the previous day. The chaplain would then issue a corresponding annual circular letter headed "Granting of Leave for the Year 19..".<sup>25</sup>

When in 1922 Adler transferred from the active to the reserve list of Territorial chaplains, Rev. David Hirsch was appointed a Territorial chaplain on the active list, working under Adler's general supervision. In 1923 he in turn transferred to the reserve list, and in 1924 he left Britain for an appointment in Australia. He was succeeded by Rabbi (as he had become) Marks Gollop, who was commissioned as a Territorial chaplain attached to the 47<sup>th</sup> (London) Division.<sup>26</sup> On 1 November 1926 Gollop succeeded Adler as Senior Jewish Chaplain, being promoted to chaplain third class. Although a Territorial chaplain, he was formally recognised by the three services as the Senior Jewish Chaplain to the Forces in January 1927.<sup>27</sup>

The Visitation Committee took this opportunity to request by letter of 1 November 1926 Jewish representation on the Inter-Denominational Advisory Committee on

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<sup>24</sup> JM, box 2011.74.

<sup>25</sup> VC/2/generally. e.g. JC 3/3/1939, p. 46.

<sup>26</sup> VC/2/generally.

<sup>27</sup> VC/3/34. JM file 2011.74.

Army Chaplaincy Services. Established in 1916 as the Inter-Denominational Committee on Ministration to the Troops, it had at that time declined the request for Jewish representation.<sup>28</sup> In response to the request the War Office file was minuted that “This application was discussed at the meeting of the Committee Wed 4 November and a recommended [sic] was made that all<sup>29</sup> concessions should be given.” Without any hint that this was regarded as a concession, the War Office replied on 8 November 1926 accepting Gollop’s nomination as a member of the committee. Even then still viewed as a concession, despite the evidence of years of dedicated Jewish commitment forged in war without any previous wartime chaplaincy experience, the concept that parity of chaplaincy services extended to Jews had at last attained official recognition.<sup>30</sup>

Suspended during the war, the annual Chanukah Military Service was reinstated in 1918 in the Great Synagogue in London, with similar services elsewhere in the country.<sup>31</sup> In 1919 the service was almost entirely conducted by chaplains: Adler, who delivered the sermon, Geffen, Simmons, Barnett and Hirsch.<sup>32</sup> Thenceforth the service fell into abeyance, until in 1926 there was a proposal to revive it. The Visitation Committee decided not to undertake its organisation but to subsidise the fares of attendees if it were arranged by an outside committee. The Chanukah Naval and Military Service Committee, an ad hoc committee of ten members including Gollop, organised a Chanukah service. Perhaps inevitably, this overlapped with the

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<sup>28</sup> Section 9.24.2. National Archives, file WO/32/14826. Howson, *Muddling Through*, pp. 106-114, 146-147.

<sup>29</sup> The word is probably “all” but is difficult to read.

<sup>30</sup> National Archives, file WO/32/14825. Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp. 290, 401 nn. 202-206. Taylor, *Chief Rabbi Hertz*, p. 228.

<sup>31</sup> JC 29/11/1918, p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> Lipson had also been due to attend, but the service at his own Hammersmith Synagogue had not concluded in time for him to do so. JC 26/12/1919, p. 12.

role of the Visitation Committee, which decided henceforth to organise the Chanukah service itself, pointedly confining the chaplain's duties solely to religious matters connected with the service. The service in 1926 was the twenty third such service.<sup>33</sup> Thenceforth the service was held every year up to 1938, alternating between various London synagogues and followed by a dinner dance for serving and retired soldiers. It was utilised to showcase Jewish military participation and was reported in the press.

Gollop's chaplaincy correspondence constantly grew. Between 16 December 1926 and 23 May 1927 he wrote six hundred letters.<sup>34</sup> Subsidising the cost of clerical assistance for him became over the years a regular responsibility of the Visitation Committee and the United Synagogue. In May 1927 Gollop reported to the Visitation Committee that a committee had been formed to keep in touch with Jewish soldiers in India, reception committees had been established at the principal military centres and an honorary chaplain had been appointed at Gibraltar.<sup>35</sup> He hoped to make it possible for all Jewish members of H.M. Forces, no matter where they were stationed, to be kept in touch with their co-religionists, including by the appointment of honorary chaplains in various centres.<sup>36</sup> In July 1927 he reported that returns of the number of Jewish soldiers from the Adjutant General in India were to hand for the first time. The Visitation Committee decided to make representations to the Admiralty and the Air Force for similar returns.<sup>37</sup> In June 1928 Gollop reported that he had had difficulty getting a Jewish representative in Malta.<sup>38</sup> The 1928 visitation

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<sup>33</sup> Connelly, *The Great War*, p. 215.

<sup>34</sup> VC/3/48-49.

<sup>35</sup> VC/3/48-49.

<sup>36</sup> VC/3/48.

<sup>37</sup> VC/3/59.

<sup>38</sup> VC/3/90-91.



statistics show visits by Rev. I. Aarons to the *Exmouth* Training Ship, by Adler to six hospitals as well as to Wormwood Scrubs prison and by Gollop to six hospitals, four of which were military, and to Millbank (RAMC) barracks.<sup>39</sup> On 8 August 1928 Gollop and Adler participated in a memorial service at the Menin Gate at Ypres, which was followed by a special Jewish Service of Consecration attended by about a hundred people.<sup>40</sup>

It was decided that Gollop should submit quarterly chaplaincy reports, and should draft a report to the Visitation Committee with a view to it being sent to the press. His first report was dated 29 February 1928. It gave the numbers of Jewish officers and men serving in the regular forces. It recorded that men had accepted offers to be put in touch with Jewish people in Belfast, Cardiff, Woolwich, Portsmouth, Preston, Shanghai, Calcutta, Gibraltar and Bingen in Germany. Men passing through London were encouraged to call on Gollop. He was attempting to obtain financial help to enable men to go home for the festivals, and in several cases he had been able to relieve strained relationships between Jewish men and their superior officers. One Jewish soldier had been relieved of work on the Sabbath through his intervention even though there was no synagogue near his camp. Gollop had dealt with all kinds of religious problems. His objective in correspondence was for men to feel that they could turn to him at any time and could form a bond of friendship. Over two months he had issued 490 letters. He included many extracts from appreciative letters which he had received.<sup>41</sup> In his report for June to December 1928 he reported that he had effected introductions to Jewish people in Lucknow (India), Ismailia, Alexandria

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<sup>39</sup> VC/3/124.

<sup>40</sup> VC/3/98, 108, 116. LMA, ACC/3121/B/04/GL/036.

<sup>41</sup> VC/3/59-60, 98.

(Egypt), Singapore and (for sailors) Brazil. Several men who had enlisted as Church of England had been persuaded to revert to their Jewish faith. Machinery had been established to ensure visits by ministers to every Jewish patient in a Ministry of Pensions Hospital, and visitation to service hospitals was to be organised on the same lines.<sup>42</sup> In October 1929 Gollop reported that the War Office had issued orders to military hospitals to advise him of all admissions, and that he would arrange for visitation.<sup>43</sup>

Gollop's chaplaincy reports to the Visitation Committee settled into a pattern, and became annual. They included the numbers of self-declared Jews in the military, which between 1928 and 1937 fluctuated between 54 and 67 officers and 202 and 290 men in the regular forces and between 9 and 57 officers and 41 and 160 men in the territorial force. He emphasised that the true numbers were likely to be significantly higher, as a considerable number of men enlisted under a different denomination.<sup>44</sup> The number of men who had communicated with him in each year fluctuated between 80 and 106, and the number of chaplaincy letters which he had written between 700 and 1,490.<sup>45</sup> Gollop's reports also narrated his efforts to find employment for servicemen who had left the forces. Through the austerity of the 1920s and 1930s this became a continuing preoccupation, sometimes obliging men to rejoin the forces. The Visitation Committee and HMFC sought to approach Jewish employers in the hope that they could offer employment, as some denominations including non-conformists did. In 1933 Gollop recorded that the Jewish Soldiers' and Sailors' Prayer Book and the Chief Rabbi's Book of Jewish Thoughts were

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<sup>42</sup> VC/3/116.

<sup>43</sup> VC/3/131.

<sup>44</sup> VC/3/183-184.

<sup>45</sup> VC/ 3, 3A, 5, generally. LMA, ACC/3121/B/04/GL/036.

distributed free to every Jewish man who enlisted.<sup>46</sup> In 1935 he reported cases of non-Jews wishing to convert to Judaism; this was almost impossible, and they were referred back to the chaplain of their own religion, who usually dissuaded them.

Early in 1930 Gollop was appointed an Assistant Dayan at the Beth Din. Rev. (who later in 1930 became Rabbi) Louis Rabinowitz of the South Hackney Synagogue accordingly agreed to assist him in the chaplaincy work and to relieve him of the detailed work. The War Office by special concession gave permission for Rabinowitz to be appointed an assistant chaplain fourth class, and for Gollop to be promoted to chaplain third class.<sup>47</sup> Also in 1930 the War Office noticed that Jewish chaplains were not represented on the reserve of chaplains, and decided to create a reserve of Jewish chaplains to be called upon in case of emergency. HMFC submitted the names of Levin, Lipson, Barnett and Simmons, who had served as chaplains in the Great War.<sup>48</sup>

In 1930 Gollop wrote a six page paper entitled *The Jewish Chaplaincy Service and the Work of H.M. Forces Committee*. It reported that Jewish servicemen were widely scattered. Every Jewish man “has the good name of Jewry in his keeping”. It reported upon the Chaplain’s correspondence; the annual Chanukah Military Service; the exceeding difficulty of visiting many camps, large and small, some with very few Jews; the visitation of hospitals, both Ministry of Pensions and military hospitals, where possible through a local civilian Jewish community or individual; the supply of Jewish literature; and, given the prevalence of unemployment, finding employment for discharged soldiers. It said that the chaplaincy service required

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<sup>46</sup> VC/3/98, 116, 149-150. VC/3A/ 226-228, 272.

<sup>47</sup> VC/3/141-143, 147-150.

<sup>48</sup> VC/3/147-150, 161.

donations of at least £500 per annum.<sup>49</sup> With little amendment beyond the addition of a section about the temporary provision of a Jewish environment for a serviceman where possible with a local Jewish community or family, this paper became a booklet entitled *The Work of H.M. Forces Committee*, which sought donations towards the estimated chaplaincy costs of at least £700 per annum.<sup>50</sup> At the annual chaplains' conference of the London District and Eastern Command in February 1931 Gollop spoke about his work.<sup>51</sup> In 1932 he wrote an article in the RACHD Journal entitled *The Chaplains' Department and the Jewish Soldier* referring amongst other matters to his efforts to address the religious isolation of Jewish servicemen by establishing contact with Jewish leaders and families abroad, whether in Belfast or Shanghai, Gibraltar or Calcutta, Hong Kong or Jamaica, and in ports where the Royal Navy docked.<sup>52</sup>

In November 1929 an Armistice Service for Jewish soldiers was held at the Great Synagogue in Duke's Place in London. In his sermon Lipson said that "there was no Armistice so far as the Jew was concerned; for unjust and evil accusations of being faithless citizens and of not being wanted, were the Jewish lot and reward for bravery".<sup>53</sup> HMFC continued to meet through the 1930s.<sup>54</sup> In November 1930 an Armistice Day and Remembrance Service for Jewish soldiers was held on the Sunday before Remembrance Day on Horse Guards Parade in London, and some two and a half thousand people attended. The event was repeated there each year up to 1938, with numbers reaching nearly five thousand in 1933. A wreath in the

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<sup>49</sup> VC/3/149-150, 183-184.

<sup>50</sup> *The Work of H.M. Forces Committee*.

<sup>51</sup> JRACHD, edition 32, July 1931, p.103.

<sup>52</sup> JRACHD, edition 34, July 1932, pp. 205-207.

<sup>53</sup> Connelly, *The Great War*, p.215. JC 15/11/1929, p. 21.

<sup>54</sup> VC/3, 3A, 5 generally. JC 31/3/1939, p. 47.

form of a Magen David was laid at the Cenotaph. From 1932 the BBC broadcast the service, which was followed by a reunion tea. The service was not under the aegis of the Visitation Committee or the Jewish Chaplaincy. As its numbers attending this service grew through the 1930s, those attending the Chanukah Military Service declined. The Visitation Committee discussed the possibility of amalgamating the two events but concluded that this was impractical.<sup>55</sup>

In the autumn of 1938 a small British military force was due to be despatched to Czechoslovakia. In response to a suggestion from Alliance Israelite Universelle, Gollop and the President of the Board of Deputies, Neville Laski, agreed that it was not appropriate to ask the War Office to attach a Jewish chaplain to it.<sup>56</sup>

Early in 1939 the War Office expressed the desire that all religious denominations should create a reserve of chaplains. HMFC recommended to the Visitation Committee the creation of a Chaplaincy Sub-Committee, which met for the first time in May 1939. It identified twelve potential chaplains, nine in London and three in the provinces. Gollop first approached each of them unofficially. One, Eli Cashdan, proved to be an American citizen and so ineligible, although he later served. Four said that they were unable to serve for different reasons, although two of them, Leslie Edgar and Wolf Morein, also later served. In one afternoon HMFC interviewed the other seven and decided to recommend four: Isaac Chait, Abraham da Souza Pimontel, Israel Brodie (who had served in the Great War) and Arthur Super. Assuming that their communities (and in Brodie's case, Jews College, where he was a lecturer) were agreeable, the Visitation Committee would be asked to recommend

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<sup>55</sup> Morris, *The Ajax Chronicles*, pp. 15-17, 157-159. Kitching, *Britain's Jews in the First World War*, p. 260.

<sup>56</sup> LMA, ACC/3121/E/03/065.

them to the War Office for commissions in the Reserve of Officers. One of those whom HMFC did not recommend, Isaac Levy, subsequently served with great distinction.<sup>57</sup>

The Military Training Act required recruits to register on Saturday 3 June 1939. Gollop and the Secretary of the Board of Deputies, A. G. Brotman, called upon the authorities, who assured them entirely unofficially and confidentially that men would be given a few days' grace without enquiry into the circumstances. Gollop included this in a circular to synagogue ministers, which would enable it to become known to men who did not wish to register on the Sabbath. Intentionally he did not publish it in the Jewish press, for fear of its appearing to people of ill will, who were already saying that Jews were shirking service on spurious medical grounds, to be a further concession to Jewish recruits.<sup>58</sup>

In June 1939 preparations were being made for a Chanukah Military Service on Sunday 10 December at the Great Synagogue. It was to be preceded by a march through the East End of London by Jewish forces, regular, militia and territorials, at which many hundreds were expected. Also in June 1939 HMFC discussed reviving the Annual Passover Service, suggested for the second day of Passover, for serving members of H.M. Forces; Adler narrated the background to this service, which had last been held some years previously.<sup>59</sup> Both events and the Annual Remembrance Service were overtaken by the outbreak of war.<sup>60</sup> In August 1939 Gollop liaised with

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<sup>57</sup> VC/5/136-137, 142-143.

<sup>58</sup> LMA, ACC/3121/E/03/065.

<sup>59</sup> Interestingly, there seems to be no other record of such a Passover service having been held.

<sup>60</sup> LMA, ACC/3121/E/03/065. VC/5/144-147, 162.

the authorities to postpone the call-up of militia men due to be called up on the second day of Rosh Hashanah on Friday 15 September.<sup>61</sup>

### 10.3. Shanghai: Rev. Mendel Brown (23 May 1885 – 11 December 1949)

Born in Poland and taken with his family to Britain at the age of eight, Rev. Menahem Mendel Brown became in 1932 the minister of the Sephardi Synagogue in Shanghai. He served as chaplain to the Jewish Company of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps, a company formed in 1933 by Russian Jews and led by an English Jew, Captain Noel Jacobs. The Corps helped the municipal police to maintain order and provided assistance in August 1937 during the Sino-Japanese War, for which Brown received two medals from the Shanghai Municipal Council. Later he and the men of the Jewish Company worked to welcome refugees arriving from Europe and to help them to settle.

Brown served as its chaplain until the Shanghai Volunteer Corps was disbanded early in 1942 after the Japanese occupied Shanghai. In March 1943 many of the occupants of the international settlements were placed in internment camps, euphemistically termed “civilian assembly centres”. Because he had a heart condition Brown was exempted from internment until June 1944. In the camp he became the “official interpreter” of the daily news and worked hard to maintain morale. Released in August 1945, he returned to Britain, where he died in 1949.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> JC 4/8/1939, p.10; 11/8/1939, pp. 12, 16.

<sup>62</sup> Guang, *The Jews in Shanghai*. Krantzler, *Japanese, Nazis and Jews*, pp. 51, 94-95, 108 n. 55. Meyer, *Shanghai's Baghdadi Jews*, pp. 13, 14, 92. Sugarman, *Fighting Back*, pp. 3, 9. Sugarman, *Hagedud Ha-Sini: The Jewish Company of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps 1932-42* in JHS, vol. 41, 2007, pp. 183-208 at 189, 196. Reifler (Brown's oldest daughter), *Seattle Jews from China*, introduction, photographs, Henrietta Reifler biography. *Points East Newsletter*, vol. 16, no. 3, pages 4-5, *Memories of My Father, Rev. Mendel Brown*, by Henrietta Reifler. Information from Brown's granddaughter Victoria Bricker (daughter of Brown's daughter Henrietta

#### 10.4. Conclusion

In the interwar years the commissioned wartime chaplaincy adapted itself to peacetime conditions, and sought to serve former as well as current soldiers. In 1921 Adler was instrumental at his own arduous initiative in the preservation and proper designation of numerous Jewish graves on the former western front whose identity would otherwise have been lost. In 1926 the integration and parity of Jewish chaplaincy services received official recognition through the Inter-Denominational Advisory Committee on Army Chaplaincy Services. In the 1920s Adler weaponised the Jewish military contribution, including that of chaplains, in the *British Jewry Book of Honour* and in other ways, against resurgent antisemitism. In the 1930s he did so again against the growth of fascism. In 1930 and again in 1939 the authorities initiated the creation of a reserve of Jewish chaplains, to which the Jewish community responded. That apart, the development of chaplaincy was continued by the Jewish community and accommodated by the authorities.

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Reifler). *New Israel Messenger*, 359, May-June 1999, Bulletin Igud Yotzei Sin, *Reverend Mendel Brown – Rabbi and Educator* (author not stated). JC 16/12/1949, p.6 (obituary). LMA, ACC/2805/04/04/010 (draft letter stating that Brown had acted for some years as the minister of the East London Synagogue in Rectory Square, E.).



## 11. THE SECOND WORLD WAR

### 11.1. Introduction

By 1939 the British Jewish community numbered perhaps some 350,000 people.

The grinding poverty of the immigrants had eased and after living through the years of the depression they were engaged in a range of businesses and occupations.

Many of the immigrant generation remained in the “east end” of the cities and had not yet encountered the ways of the established community. Some had taken British nationality. Their children and grandchildren had been brought up and educated in Britain. The Second World War threw together Jews of military age from both the established and the immigrant communities and accelerated the coalescence of the two communities.

The 1930s saw the arrival of some 55,000 Jewish refugees from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, including some 10,000 unaccompanied children on the *Kindertransporte*.<sup>1</sup> Insofar as they were a community at all they were a separate one. Many were interned as enemy aliens soon after the outbreak of war. Later many of military age were permitted to enlist in the armed forces, initially only in the non-combatant Pioneer Corps and later in fighting units.

In the Second World War some one million Jews served in Allied armies, nearly half of them in the USSR. Of the approximately 350,000 Jewish people, including children and the elderly, living in Britain, some 65,000 (1 in 5.4) served in the armed forces in the Second World War. Some 3,000 (1 in 21.6 of those serving) lost their

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<sup>1</sup> Turner, ...*And The Policeman Smiled*. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, pp. 215, 231. JHS, vol. 51, 2019, generally.

lives, 1,900 in the Army, 900 in the RAF and 200 in the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy. Some 500,000 Jews, including children and the elderly, lived under the British mandate in Palestine, of whom some 70,000 (1 in 7) volunteered to serve, some 30,000 served and some 700 (1 in 43 of those serving) lost their lives. Jews served in every theatre of the Second World War, in very many formations and in virtually every major engagement. Three Victoria Crosses and three George Crosses were awarded to Jews.<sup>2</sup> Snape considers (with which, based upon my research, I venture to agree) that, against a backdrop of religious decline, especially in formal religious practice, British Jewry, in common with the British churches, made gigantic, even heroic, efforts in the Second World War, as in the First, to provide for the spiritual, moral, mental, physical and medical needs of the British soldier.<sup>3</sup>

Jewish chaplains, like many Jews, were also motivated by a profound sense of the threat that Nazism posed to the Jewish people. Rev. Isaac Levy explained he was not motivated by a general sense of patriotism but rather that he viewed Nazism as a threat to democracy and his own people. The chaplains included twelve ministers and others living in Palestine who were commissioned as chaplains. For them, as for many Palestinian Jews, the Zionist motivation to create a Jewish state after the war was also a factor.<sup>4</sup> For the Jews of Palestine the struggle was existential, for had the Axis triumphed in North Africa they would have had to fight to the last man and woman, and were preparing to do so, rather than submit to extermination.

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<sup>2</sup> Morris and Sugarman, *We Will Remember Them*, pp. xxxii, xxxix, liv, 3-5. Rabinowitz, *Far East Mission*, pp.7-9. Greisman, *Jews in Uniform*, pp.4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Snape, *God and the British Soldier*, pp.239, 241-242.

<sup>4</sup> Robinson, *Chaplains at War*, pp.102-103.

## 11.2. The Royal Army Chaplains' Department

By 1939 the role of the Royal Army Chaplains' Department had been forged in war, as had the role of Jewish chaplaincy within it. The mobilisation of chaplains went smoothly, with a clear sense of their wartime role.<sup>5</sup> Military chaplains remained volunteers. Unlike in the First World War, they were not appointed on fixed term contracts. Although nearly eighty per cent received what were termed emergency commissions, chaplains were expected to serve for the duration of the war, so that if able bodied their earlier release was exceptional. In the course of the Second World War some 3,700 chaplains of all denominations served, and one hundred lost their lives.<sup>6</sup> Three Jewish chaplains died, although none through enemy action. Rev. Wolf Morein died in hospital in Britain in September 1941. Rev. Harry Bornstein died in Tripoli in North Africa in November 1943. Rev. Solly Hooker died in hospital in India after an operation in February 1946.

In December 1939 the RACHD raised the issue of conforming its Jewish badge to the standard pattern, with a Star of David in place of the Cross and omitting the motto enjoining chaplains to work in that Sign. Research elicited that since 1914 Jewish chaplains had worn a badge of the Star of David surmounted by a Crown but that no record of the formal approval of the badge could be traced, and that when the existing badge of the RACHD had been approved in 1930 nothing had been settled as regards Jews. So Jewish cap and collar badges were designed of a Star of David surmounted by the Imperial Crown embellished with a wreath of laurel and oak leaves and with a central ornamental button bearing a quatrefoil. The badge was

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<sup>5</sup> Snape and Madigan, *The Clergy in Khaki*, per Dr Alan Robinson, p. 211.

<sup>6</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp. 280, 336, 339-340.

approved by the War Office and in May 1940 by the King and dies for the badge were commissioned.<sup>7</sup>

At the outbreak of war there were only two commissioned Jewish chaplains, Gollop, who was the Senior Jewish Chaplain, and Rabinowitz. Both had served with the Territorials and were therefore immediately called up.<sup>8</sup> The number of British Jewish chaplains expanded from two at the outbreak of war to, ultimately, (on my count) fifty-six. Of these, fifty, including eleven recruited in Palestine, were in the Army and six, including one recruited in Palestine, in the RAF. At one stage the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean sought a Jewish chaplain, but without success. The British born chaplains were mostly from the Orthodox sector of Judaism but two were ministers of the Liberal denomination. It was not possible entirely to coordinate the release of ministers into the armed forces, although the JWSC<sup>9</sup> attempted to do so. Individual ministers volunteered, and their synagogue would then try to find a replacement.<sup>10</sup>

The army organised chaplaincy training courses lasting some fourteen days, from June 1940 in Chester and from late in 1942 at Tidworth in Wiltshire. Chaplains who had been appointed earlier and chaplains appointed in Palestine did not receive this training. Twenty-seven Jewish chaplains attended the courses. There was a course report on each of the participants. Among the Jewish chaplains, only one report survives, of 23 July 1945 on Rev. Sigmund Margulies. It records: "Jew. Fitted in very well and was generally liked. Intelligent and co-operative. Should do well."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> National Archives, file WO/32/9455. JC 16/8/1940, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> JC 17/11/1939, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> I discuss this in section 11.4.

<sup>10</sup> Robinson, *Chaplains at War*, pp.96-97.

<sup>11</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp. 293-294. Training records at the Museum of Army Chaplaincy.

### 11.3. Officiating Clergymen

By November 1939 twenty-six officiating clergymen had been appointed; by May 1940 there were sixteen more, totalling forty-two. They seem often to have been referred to as officiating chaplains.<sup>12</sup> Two had by then been commissioned as chaplains, and others went on to be commissioned. I have identified them, with the location of their synagogues and in some cases their areas of military responsibility<sup>13</sup>, and have identified several other ministers who conducted services for troops and ARP personnel.<sup>14</sup> These included the officiating chaplain for the South West of England, Rev. Emanuel Goodman of Plymouth, who ministered to troops from the Allied nations in the build up to D-Day in 1943-44.<sup>15</sup> The Ministry of Home Security granted selected Jewish ministers, including Rev. Eli Kahan of Harrogate, the freedom of the streets during air raids in order to minister to casualties of the Jewish faith. They wore an armband, issued by the JWSC, with the letters A.R.P. in red and a Magen David in white on an Air Force blue background.<sup>16</sup> In October 1945 the War Office wrote to the JWSC to express its appreciation of the work of officiating chaplains in the United Kingdom during the war.<sup>17</sup>

### 11.4. The Jewish War Services Committee

At the outbreak of war, meetings of the Visitation Committee were suspended<sup>18</sup> and it did not meet again until October 1945. Thenceforth its activities were largely

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<sup>12</sup> Section 1.

<sup>13</sup> JC 24/11/1939, p. 25; 22/3/1940, p. 19; 5/4/1940, p. 35; 24/5/1940, p. 16. LMA, ACC/2712/15/2075.

<sup>14</sup> JC 5/1/1940, p. 23; 11/10/1940, p. 17; 25/10/1940, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Information and photographs from Stuart Goodman (son). Illustration 6.

<sup>16</sup> JC 20/9/1940, p. 11. Illustration 7.

<sup>17</sup> JC 26/10/1945, p. 18.

<sup>18</sup> VC/5/166.

concerned with prison visiting and from 1946 not at all with military chaplaincy.<sup>19</sup> There was communal pressure to revive the Jewish War Services Committee of the First World War.<sup>20</sup> As early as 8 September 1939 Chief Rabbi Hertz wrote to the Army Council, the Air Council and the Board of Admiralty stating that he was constituting a small committee of the lay leaders of the Anglo-Jewish community to assist him in connection with a large number of problems affecting members of the Jewish Faith serving in H.M. Forces and requesting official recognition of the Committee.<sup>21</sup> The War Office recognised the committee as the body with which the Army Council would correspond about questions affecting the spiritual needs of members of the Jewish Faith serving in the Army except in cases where the Chief Rabbi saw fit to address the Army Council himself.<sup>22</sup>

The Committee became known (omitting the Chief Rabbi's suggested word "Religious") as the Jewish War Services Committee. All of its members were selected by the Chief Rabbi at his own discretion. On 7 December 1939 its Chairman, Lionel de Rothschild, wrote to the United Synagogue:

With the approval of the War Office this Committee has been set up as a representative Committee similar to that which functioned in the last war, to deal with the many problems affecting members of the Jewish Faith serving in His Majesty's Forces.

Its objects are to provide chaplaincy services carried out under the Senior Chaplain and a secretarial department; to provide for the arrangement of

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<sup>19</sup> VC/5/191, 200.

<sup>20</sup> JC 29/9/1939, p. 15; 6/10/1939, p. 12; 13/10/1939, p. 9; 20/10/1939, pp. 9, 15; 27/10/1939, pp. 9, 14.

<sup>21</sup> LMA, ACC/2712/15/2075.

<sup>22</sup> National Archives, file WO/32/12467. Taylor, *Chief Rabbi Hertz*, pp. 227-228.

Divine Services for as many men as regularly as possible; the provision of literature of a religious or devotional character; visits to camps and hospitals; maintaining contact by correspondence with serving Jews in isolated positions; helping and advising the relatives of soldiers; keeping accurate records of all serving Jews in His Majesty's Forces; arranging for soldiers on leave to receive hospitality from their co-religionists: and, in general, by maintaining personal contact with the soldier and gaining his confidence, to provide him with the best means of preserving his moral sanctions and religious loyalty.

A sub-committee was designated to deal primarily with the appointment of chaplains in consultation with the Senior Jewish Chaplain. The JWSC also sought local officiating clergymen, arranged hospitality within Jewish communities for servicemen on leave and for Passover and the High Holydays, including inviting Canadian servicemen to Passover Seder services, and planned to open a "chaplain's welcome room" at its headquarters at Woburn House for anybody wishing to see a chaplain.

Most of the funding for the JWSC came from the United Synagogue, which also provided office facilities. Other sources of income included the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, provincial synagogues and public donations. When a United Synagogue minister became a chaplain, his salary from the United Synagogue was to be reduced by the amount of his army pay and allowances. When Lionel de Rothschild died he was succeeded in March 1942 as chairman of the committee by the vice-chairman, Sir Robert Waley Cohen.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> LMA, ACC/2712/15/2075. National Archives, file WO/32/12467. Robinson, *Chaplains at War*, pp.70-71 and note 34. The absence of the records of the JWSC limits understanding of the basis for the appointment of chaplains: section 5.

### 11.5. The British Expeditionary Force

By December 1939 the British Expeditionary Force of some two hundred thousand men was in France. It was somehow ascertained and published that it included 243 Jews.<sup>24</sup> Jews who were serving were urged to register with a Jewish chaplain to maintain contact and to refute the charge being made in some quarters at the beginning of the war that Jews were not “doing their bit”. Army regulations provided for one chaplain for every 1,100 men of any denomination. However there was immediate pressure, including from Rev. Michael Adler, in letters and editorials in the *Jewish Chronicle* and at the Board of Deputies and a question in Parliament in February 1940, to despatch one or more Jewish chaplains to join it.<sup>25</sup>

In January 1940 arrangements were discussed with the War Office for Gollop to visit units in France, travelling in company with the Deputy Chaplain General in the latter’s car, but those arrangements did not materialise. Gollop did however visit the B.E.F. from 7 to 28 February 1940. Within the auxiliary services of the B.E.F. were seven hundred volunteers from Palestine, of whom nearly six hundred were Jews. Gollop travelled to all of the important centres where British troops were stationed, in base areas and the front line, and conducted many religious services. The Chaplain’s Office had been in touch with thousands of Jewish men and women of all ranks, and Gollop wrote to the relatives of every Jewish soldier whom he had seen each day. He also took part in a BBC Saturday night broadcast by chaplains of all

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<sup>24</sup> LMA, ACC/3121/E/03/065.

<sup>25</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, p. 286. JC 20/10/1939, pp. 9, 15; 3/11/1939, p.17; 10/11/1939, p. 15; 17/11/1939, p. 18; 1/12/1939, p. 17; 8/12/1939, p. 15; 5/1/1940, pp.16, 24; 19/1/1940, p. 26; 26/1/1940, pp.6, 14; 23/2/1940, p. 8.



denominations with the B.E.F. Attempts were made to supply kosher food to Jewish soldiers.<sup>26</sup>

As a result of his experiences Gollop was able to convince the authorities in the B.E.F. that a Jewish Chaplain was absolutely necessary.<sup>27</sup> Two Jewish Chaplains, Rabbi Israel Brodie, who had served as a chaplain in the First World War, and Rev. Bernard Cherrick, were despatched. The *Jewish Chronicle* applauded this, and recorded that chaplains Gollop, Rabinowitz and Levy were also functioning among Jewish troops at home. "Time alone can say whether that figure [of five] will need to be augmented."<sup>28</sup>

Rabbi Brodie circularised all known Jewish soldiers, arranged for the Chief Rabbi of France to circularise his communities to extend hospitality to Jewish soldiers in their area and tried to supply Jewish soldiers with matza and to arrange Passover Seder services. Through the JWSC large amounts of matza, meat and chocolate were despatched to the B.E.F. Brodie was on the beaches at Dunkirk for four days before arriving back in the UK on 29 May 1940. In a shattered state of mind he went to stay with his brother in Yorkshire to recuperate.<sup>29</sup> Rev. Bernard Cherrick (1914 - 22 December 1988) served as a chaplain to the Palestinian companies of the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps and was evacuated from St. Malo. His health deteriorated and he was invalided out of the Army and had to abandon his ministerial career.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Gollop ACC. JC 9/2/1940, p. 10; 16/2/1940, pp. 1, 27; 1/3/1940, p. 7; 15/3/1940, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> JC 15/3/1940, p.1.

<sup>28</sup> JC 29/3/1940, p. 20.

<sup>29</sup> VC/5/136-143. JC 31/3/1939, p. 12; 28/4/1939, p. 10; 29/12/1939, p. 17; 5/4/1940, p. 32; 12/4/1940, pp. 13, 29; 19/4/1940, p. 8; 28/6/1940, p. 11; 23/8/1940, p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> LMA, ACC/2712/15/2075. JC 21/6/1940, p. 13; 19/7/1940, p. 7; 23/8/1940, p. 5; 14/2/1941, p. 15; 30/5/1941, p.6; 13/2/1942, p.8.

## 11.6. Chaplaincy Organisation

In September 1939 Gollop appealed for particulars of people serving in the fighting services. He repeated the appeal in September 1940, both generally and specifically to enable Jewish members of the Local Defence Volunteers (the Home Guard) to come in an emergency under the spiritual care of Jewish chaplains in their area. By this time there were eight commissioned Jewish chaplains ministering to Home Forces, with every Command having its chaplain and the Command Chaplains assisted by civilian ministers as officiating chaplains and visiting ministers. There were nine Jewish clubs in London open to troops.<sup>31</sup>

In January 1940 Gollop reported to the Board of Deputies that there were two commissioned Jewish chaplains, that thirty-six<sup>32</sup> Jewish ministers had been appointed by the military authorities as officiating chaplains to various stations and districts throughout the country and that there were twelve visiting ministers to Jewish troops stationed within easy access of their congregations. Whilst religious ministrations were available to troops stationed in almost every part of the country, there were very small scattered units up and down the country far removed from Jewish communities which were almost inaccessible and visits to their stations were almost impossible. Contact with known Jewish serving men was maintained by correspondence from the Chaplain's Office. The public were urged to report to the Chaplain's Office the names and particulars of all serving Jews whom they knew.<sup>33</sup>

Gollop was formally attached to 1<sup>st</sup> Anti-Aircraft Group. In November 1940 he wrote to the Deputy Chaplain General, L. Gethin Hughes, suggesting a re-organisation of

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<sup>31</sup> JC 29/9/1939, p. 7; 16/8/1940, p. 13; 6/9/1940, pp. 11, 15.

<sup>32</sup> Probably an error for twenty-six.

<sup>33</sup> LMA, ACC/3121/E/03/065. JC 26/1/1940, p. 6.

the work of Southern Command and the appointment of an additional Jewish chaplain, which in December 1940 was approved.<sup>34</sup> Also in November 1940 he discussed privately with the War Office whether to publish the number of Jews serving in HM Forces, which it was felt inadvisable to do.<sup>35</sup> He arranged with the Imperial War Graves Commission for temporary wooden grave markers with a Shield of David emblem to be erected over Jewish graves pending the later erection of headstones.<sup>36</sup> With Jewish personnel scattered throughout every arm of the services Jewish chaplains attached to area commands were supplied with nominal rolls of Jewish personnel.<sup>37</sup> The chaplaincy established a card index system, with a card for each Jewish serviceman in Britain recording each occasion upon which they received a visit from a chaplain or any of the books produced for Jewish personnel.<sup>38</sup>

The question arose of the fear of ill-treatment of Jews in H.M. Forces taken prisoner by the Germans, and the consequent possibility of Jews enlisting under another religious denomination. When the issue reached the *Jewish Chronicle* Gollop and Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz stated publicly the reasons why Jews should not do so, and Rev. Hyman L. Alexander and an anonymous soldier who had served at the front in the previous war supported them.<sup>39</sup> The issue periodically resurfaced with letters to the press from soldiers discouraging the practice.<sup>40</sup>

The *Prayer Book for Jewish Sailors and Soldiers* which had been issued in the First World War was reissued, its title extended to airmen, in 1940, as was Mr. B. L. Q.

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<sup>34</sup> National Archives, file WO/32/12467.

<sup>35</sup> LMA, ACC/3121/E/03/065.

<sup>36</sup> JC 28/11/1941, p. 13 (photo).

<sup>37</sup> Morris and Sugarman, *We Will Remember Them*, pp. 27-30, per Rev. Isaac Levy.

<sup>38</sup> Many of these cards survive at the Jewish Museum. Illustration 8 (that of my father).

<sup>39</sup> JC 22/12/1939, p. 20; 29/12/1939, p.9.

<sup>40</sup> e.g. JC 6/8/1943, p. 13.

Henriques' *Prayers for Trench and Base*. The Chief Rabbi's *A Book of Jewish Thoughts* was reprinted many times, including in 1940 and 1941 and in Cairo in June 1943, and was to be reissued in 1952.<sup>41</sup> *Readings from the Holy Scriptures for Jewish Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen*, selected by the Chief Rabbi, was issued in 1940 and, renamed in 1942 *Readings from Holy Scripture for the Jewish Members of His Majesty's Forces*. These books were pocket sized, and were distributed through the Chief Rabbi's Literature Fund. To provide for the religious welfare of the troops there was established the Chief Rabbi's Religious Emergency Council, which supplied religious requisites including sets of Tefillin to soldiers.

Chief Rabbi Hertz broadcast during the war twice a year, on Passover and the New Year, to the Jewish community and the nation. In 1941 he broadcast to the Jews in Europe.<sup>42</sup> In September 1943 Hertz and Gollop broadcast to mark the New Year. So, from Britain, did Rabbi Rabinowitz, speaking about the Jews fighting in the Allied Armies in the Mediterranean campaign, and, during the festivals, French chaplain Rabbi M. Arruas.<sup>43</sup> In 1944 Hertz broadcast, no doubt on Forces Radio, to the forces in various theatres, and issued instructions for the blackout for Kol Nidrei services on Yom Kippur.<sup>44</sup> Senior Jewish Chaplain Brodie broadcast to H.M. Forces, on 6 December 1944 on the theme of comradeship between Jews and Christians and in March 1945 with a Passover message.<sup>45</sup>

Army Council Instruction no. 1,000 of 1941 authorised an alternative diet to be provided for conscientiously Orthodox Jews.<sup>46</sup> In March 1941 the Chief Rabbi's

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<sup>41</sup> JC 6/9/1940, p.15; 19/9/1941, p. 31; 25/6/1943, p. 7.

<sup>42</sup> Taylor, *Chief Rabbi Hertz*, p. 239; *British Chief Rabbis*, pp. 365-366.

<sup>43</sup> JC 24/9/1943, p. 11; 8/10/1943, p. 11; 29/10/1943, p. 18.

<sup>44</sup> JC 15/9/1944, p. 1; 22/9/1944, p. 11.

<sup>45</sup> JC 23/3/1945, p.6.

<sup>46</sup> LMA, ACC/3400/02/05/041.

Emergency Council, presided over by Gollop, discussed organising kosher food parcel services for personnel who wanted it.<sup>47</sup> With the help of the Ministry of Food every observant Jew in the forces received a fortnightly kosher food parcel. After the invasion of Europe the kosher food parcel service was not available there for some months, but was resumed in December 1944.<sup>48</sup> In March 1945 Craftsman Robert Cramer, REME, wrote to say that his fortnightly parcels of food and religious requisites had arrived regularly since 1940.<sup>49</sup>

In March 1944 the JWSC appealed for used copies of the *Jewish Chronicle*, as chaplains were constantly being asked for them.<sup>50</sup> Eleven Jewish soldiers wrote to express their thanks for copies of the *Jewish Chronicle* sent to the Jewish Services Club.<sup>51</sup> Subsequently arrangements were worked out with the Chaplain's Office and the JHC for used copies to be provided to members of the forces.<sup>52</sup>

Throughout the war the Senior Jewish Chaplain arranged for orders to be issued by the War Office, the Admiralty and the Air Ministry for leave to be granted to personnel on application to commanding officers for the New Year and the Day of Atonement and for Passover if the exigencies of service permitted. This was always publicised in the *Jewish Chronicle*.<sup>53</sup> Sometimes commanding officers or non-Jewish chaplains of their own initiative facilitated Jewish services or Jewish personnel being

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<sup>47</sup> JC 14/3/1941, pp. 1, 6.

<sup>48</sup> JC 5/1/1945, p. 17.

<sup>49</sup> Taylor, *Solomon Schonfeld*, p. 82. JC 16/3/1945, p. 12.

<sup>50</sup> JC 3/3/1944, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> JC 1/9/1944, p. 16.

<sup>52</sup> JC 26/1/1945, p. 10.

<sup>53</sup> e.g. JC 6/9/1940, p. 1; 14/3/1941, p. 23; 22/8/1941, p. 1; 30/1/1942, p. 15; 14/8/1942, p. 9; 19/2/1943, p. 1; 13/8/1943, p. 11; 27/8/1943, p. 11 (appealing for Machzorim and Tallisim for members of the Forces of the United Nations); 11/2/1944, p. 6; 25/8/1944, p. 7; 16/2/1945, pp. 5, 14; 17/8/1945, p.11; 8/3/1946, p. 5.

excused duty on Saturdays.<sup>54</sup> Jewish personnel sometimes encountered difficulties in obtaining festival leave, and on occasion wrote to the press about it.<sup>55</sup>

In June 1944 a Jewish soldier was court martialled for refusing to fulfil military duties on the Sabbath. Perhaps in consequence, Brodie, who by this time had succeeded Gollop as Senior Jewish Chaplain, sought a ruling on this issue from the London Beth Din. It responded in August 1944 that as the war would seem to be drawing to its close the few cases likely to occur could be dealt with as they arose. Courteously dissenting from this wishful and impractical thinking, Brodie issued a ruling that Jewish personnel should make every effort to be freed from their duties on the Sabbath provided that they offered to perform extra duties and fatigues during weekdays, but that where the exigencies of service required duties to be carried out on the Sabbath day this would not involve its desecration.<sup>56</sup>

### 11.7. Conferences

In April 1941 a conference was held in London to discuss permanent co-operation among the Jewish chaplains of the Continental Allied Forces. Participants included Jewish chaplains Major Melzer and Captain Klepfisz of the Polish Army and Lieutenant Krausz of the Czechoslovak Army.<sup>57</sup> In August 1941 there was an enquiry for a minister suitable to act as Jewish chaplain to the Free French Forces.<sup>58</sup> On Monday 8 May 1944 there was a conference of British Jewish chaplains, which was also attended by members of the London Beth Din.<sup>59</sup> During the weekend of 11-12 November 1944 the Jewish Chaplains of the United States Eighth Air Force held a

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<sup>54</sup> e.g. JC 15/8/1941, p. 17.

<sup>55</sup> e.g. JC 8/8/1941, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> LMA, ACC/3400/02/05/041.

<sup>57</sup> JC 11/4/1941, p.1. Illustration 9.

<sup>58</sup> LMA, ACC/3121/E/03/065.

<sup>59</sup> LMA, ACC/3400/02/05/041.

conference at the West London Reform Synagogue. The British Rev. S. Lipson, who had been a chaplain in the First World War, and Rev. L. Edgar, participated.<sup>60</sup> Speakers at this non-Orthodox venue included Chief Rabbi Hertz, who had the previous year fought to prevent the appointment of a non-Orthodox minister as the Senior Jewish Chaplain.<sup>61</sup> This was an indication of at least a limited religious diversity which, perhaps under the influence of wartime, was more acceptable than it would be today. The majority of the Jewish chaplains from the United States were not Orthodox, and Hertz may have identified the opportunity to introduce an Orthodox perspective into their conference. A further conference of American Jewish Chaplains lasting for six days took place in the same venue in June 1945, and was addressed by various speakers including British chaplains Revs. I. Chait and I. Levy.<sup>62</sup>

### 11.8. Shortage of Chaplains

In an editorial at the time of the New Year in 1942 the *Jewish Chronicle* recognised the difficulties facing the Jewish chaplaincy and applauded its work.<sup>63</sup> Inevitably there were never enough Jewish chaplains. Soldiers sometimes wrote to the press to say this, and the shortage of chaplains became a recurrent issue. In February 1944 Rifleman E. Cohen, who had served in Libya and Italy, felt it keenly when his younger brother was killed in Italy and he had received a letter from a Church of England chaplain to say that he had buried him as no Jewish chaplain had been available.<sup>64</sup> Sergeant H. R. Oskotsky RAOC suggested in March 1944 that there

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<sup>60</sup> JC 17/11/1944, pp. 1, 8; 24/11/1944, pp. 6, 13.

<sup>61</sup> I discuss this in section 11.14.

<sup>62</sup> JC 29/6/1945, p. 5; 6/7/1945, p. 17.

<sup>63</sup> JC 25/9/1942, pp. 8, 9.

<sup>64</sup> JC 11/2/1944, p. 13.

were numbers of suitable men inside and outside the armed forces who would be attracted by the chaplaincy.<sup>65</sup> Major William Schonfield, the Army Welfare Officer for No. 8 District, who had been in charge of the administrative work of the JWSC in the First World War, suggested in May 1944 that, as had happened then, suitable laymen be appointed and temporarily ordained, on the basis of their promise to complete their studies after the war.<sup>66</sup>

1944 was a critical year and, for the Christian churches too, it was becoming increasingly difficult to fill all available vacancies for chaplains. An anonymous soldier repeated the complaint in June 1944 of the shortage of chaplains. In an editorial entitled *Not Enough Jewish Chaplains* the *Jewish Chronicle* supported him, writing that “Chaplaincy on the fighting front demands immense vigour and vitality, such as only the young and very fit can command. It also demands very special qualities of mind and character, tact and understanding of men.” It chastised synagogues for their unwillingness to part with ministers.<sup>67</sup> Lieutenant-Commander J. Freedman, RN, echoed the complaint, suggesting that hospitality invitations and transport tickets be sent to Jewish men and women serving in isolated districts.<sup>68</sup> Corporal Edward J. Landau of the Parachute Brigade, BLA, complained that after the return of his unit from Normandy after D-Day and again from Arnhem there were no Rosh Hashanah services nor, alone among all the denominations, Jewish memorial services for fallen comrades.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> JC 3/3/1944, p. 13.

<sup>66</sup> JC 19/5/1944, p. 13.

<sup>67</sup> JC 30/6/1944, pp. 8, 12.

<sup>68</sup> JC 28/7/1944, p. 12.

<sup>69</sup> JC 26/1/1945, p. 14.



### 11.9. Chaplains in the Home Command

Chaplains could not be conscripted, nor if they enlisted could they be sent abroad against their will. Thirteen chaplains served wholly or predominantly in Britain, nine in the army and two in the RAF. They included Rev. Wolf Morein, who died in 1941<sup>70</sup>, Rev. Arthur Barnett, who had served in the First World War<sup>71</sup> and Rev. Dr. Isaac Kenneth Cosgrove, who also served in Norway in August 1945.<sup>72</sup> Rabbi Eliezer Rabinowitz chose to serve not as a chaplain but as a private soldier, and served in an anti-aircraft unit.<sup>73</sup>

Under Army Council Instruction NOJ02 of 1942 and Air Ministry Order 991 of 1943 permission was given to appoint lay leaders and lay preachers from among members of H.M. Forces to assist chaplains and officiating chaplains. Their duties were primarily to consist of conducting religious services and looking after the spiritual and welfare interests of personnel of their religion in their unit.<sup>74</sup>

### 11.10. Passover

The Chief Rabbi's Emergency Council sent thousands of Passover food parcels to Jews serving with British, Dutch, Czechoslovakian and Polish forces.<sup>75</sup> In 1942 food was supplied for Passover to British, Canadian and American soldiers.<sup>76</sup> Inevitably

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<sup>70</sup> JC 13/6/1941, p. 13; 20/6/1941, p. 24; 1/8/1941, p. 19 (photo); 26/9/1941, pp. 3, 4, 6 (photo and obituary); 3/10/1941, p. 4; 10/10/1941, p. 6. My interviews with David Morein (son), 26/6/2014 and 21/4/2017.

<sup>71</sup> *Wherein I Glory*, p. 84. JC 4/7/1941, p. 13.

<sup>72</sup> ACC. JC 2/8/1940, p.15; 23/5/1941, p. 15; 18/7/1941, pp. 13, 15; 2/1/1942, p. 13; 5/10/1945, p. 5. *Some Experiences of a Jewish Chaplain in Young Jewry*, published by the Joint Emergency Committee for Jewish Religious Education in Great Britain, 1946, pp. 13-14. Undated and unidentified newspaper article. Information provided by the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre. *Menorah* magazine, issue 23/1, April 1974, p.23.

<sup>73</sup> JM, file 2011.85.

<sup>74</sup> *Menorah* magazine, issue 1/2, July 1948. I cite examples in sections 11.13. and 11.20.

<sup>75</sup> JC 25/4/1941, p. 17.

<sup>76</sup> JC 13/3/1942, p. 19.

supplies of matza for Passover did not reach every Jewish soldier who wanted them, and on occasions soldiers wrote to the press to complain.<sup>77</sup> In 1943 thousands of Passover food parcels were supplied, including to American and Canadian troops.<sup>78</sup> In 1944 the JWSC despatched 25,000 pounds (by weight) of matza, 500 pounds (by weight) of meat, 15,000 pints of wine and 5,000 Haggadot.<sup>79</sup> For Passover of 1945 a convoy of lorries took seventy five large cases of Passover supplies to Jewish soldiers serving in the British Liberation Army in North West Europe.<sup>80</sup>

In 1943 Passover Seder services were organised for Jewish servicemen of many nations in many parts of Britain, including in a field by a railway cutting in an area within Southern Command conducted by SJC Gollop and in the hospitality of hundreds of Jewish homes.<sup>81</sup> In the Orkney Islands the first ever Passover Seder service, attended by servicemen and women, nurses and some civilians, was conducted by Rev. L. I. Edgar. Some men made a two day journey from the Shetlands to attend. The Forces' newspaper, the *Orkney Blast*, announced that there was a Jewish service every Saturday at 11 a.m. at the Church of Scotland Canteen (Kirkwall) conducted by Private Cohen to which all Jewish servicemen and women were cordially invited.<sup>82</sup> In August 1943 Gollop visited troops in each of the Faroe Islands.<sup>83</sup> In 1944 hospitality and Seder services were arranged for more than eighty thousand Jewish troops of the British and Allied Forces, some led by British, American and Canadian chaplains, including Rev. I. Fabricant in the Orkney Islands

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<sup>77</sup> JC 24/4/1942, p.17.

<sup>78</sup> JC 30/4/1943, pp.1, 9; 14/5/1943, p. 5.

<sup>79</sup> Taylor, *Chief Rabbi Hertz*, p. 228.

<sup>80</sup> Taylor, *Solomon Schonfeld*, p.82. JC 23/3/1945, p.1 (photo).

<sup>81</sup> JC 30/4/1943, pp.1, 9; 14/5/1943, p. 5.

<sup>82</sup> JC 14/5/1943, p. 5.

<sup>83</sup> JC 13/8/1943, p. 1; 24/9/1943, p. 16.

and Rev. J. Israelstam in the Shetlands.<sup>84</sup> In 1945 Seder services took place around Britain for British and Allied troops, including Norwegian sailors and Palestinian submarine crews, conducted by British and Allied chaplains. Vast quantities of Passover supplies were despatched around the UK, to the BLA in Europe and to the Middle East, Nigeria, West Africa, East Africa and the Gold Coast (where the Seder was conducted by Chaplain Arnold A. Lasker<sup>85</sup>).<sup>86</sup> Every year there were numerous letters of appreciation.<sup>87</sup>

#### 11.11. Festival Services and Hospitality

Gollop sought particulars of High Holyday services in districts around the country where there were no synagogues in order to pass this information to service personnel in those areas.<sup>88</sup> Numerous hospitality committees and schemes were formed around the country to provide for Jewish servicemen.<sup>89</sup> There were still complaints of a lack of hospitality, particularly for colonials and Palestinians in London.<sup>90</sup> Attempts were made in 1942 to establish a Jewish social centre in London for serving men and women similar to that which had existed in the First World War.<sup>91</sup> The Balfour Services Club at 41 Portland Place, London W.1. was formed, as was in 1943 the National Jewish Hospitality Committee for British and Allied Forces.

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<sup>84</sup> JC 14/4/1944, pp. 1, 11; 21/4/1944, pp. 1, 5, 15.

<sup>85</sup> Of whom I have found no trace.

<sup>86</sup> JC 2/3/1945, pp. 9, 11; 9/3/1945, pp. 9, 12, 15; 16/3/1945, p. 10; 6/4/1945, pp. 1, 11; 13/4/1945, p. 18. JM, file 2011.80.

<sup>87</sup> e.g. JC 13/4/1945, pp. 14, 15; 20/4/1945, p. 12; 22/6/1945, p. 14.

<sup>88</sup> JC 5/9/1941, p. 7.

<sup>89</sup> JC 17/10/1941, p. 19; 30/1/1942, p.12; 6/8/1943, p. 10; 8/10/1943, pp. 1, 5; 10/3/1944, p.12; 1/9/1944, p. 12.

<sup>90</sup> JC 17/11/1939, p. 8; 1/3/1940, p. 7; 15/3/1940, p. 34; 29/3/1940, p. 1; 9/8/1940, p. 8; 22/8/1941, p. 8; 6/2/1942, p. 10; 7/8/1942, p. 5.

<sup>91</sup> JC 27/2/1942, p. 7; 28/8/1942, p. 8; 4/9/1942, p. 15; 18/9/1942, p. 13.

In 1943 Chief Rabbi Hertz, SJC Gollop, the JWSC and French Army Chaplain Arruas appealed for hospitality for the High Holy Days.<sup>92</sup> The NJHC arranged hospitality widely throughout the UK and, in conjunction with Rev. M. Berman, for troops in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, Malta and Gibraltar. Services were held throughout the UK, attended by troops of many Allied nations, some conducted or addressed by American and Canadian chaplains. American servicemen were present at over a hundred locations; in Norwich, for example, some two hundred American and one hundred British troops joined the local community of twenty families for a service in a church hall followed by a catered lunch.<sup>93</sup> It is believed that on Rosh Hashanah of 1944 a Jewish chaplain sang prayers with a group of soldiers on an airfield before they took off for Arnhem in the knowledge that their chances of survival were slim.<sup>94</sup> For the High Holy Days of 1944 the JHC arranged hospitality in Britain<sup>95</sup> and sent representatives to France on welfare missions to spend the High Holydays with Jewish soldiers.<sup>96</sup>

Under the aegis of the Chanukah Military Services Committee formed by the major communal organisations, military services for British and Allied troops were held in December 1943 in numerous places in Britain, and numerous ministers and chaplains, including American, Canadian, French and Czech chaplains, participated.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> JC 27/8/1943, p. 11; 3/9/1943, pp. 9, 13; 10/9/1943, p. 1; 17/9/1943, p. 13.

<sup>93</sup> JC 8/10/1943, pp. 1, 5; 15/10/1943, p. 9; 29/10/1943, p. 13; 26/11/1943, p. 18.

<sup>94</sup> Greisman, *Jews in Uniform*, p.5.

<sup>95</sup> JC 6/10/1944, p. 18.

<sup>96</sup> JC 8/9/1944, p. 13; 15/9/1944, p. 1; 6/10/1944, pp. 1, 14; 13/10/1944, p. 5; 20/10/1944, p. 5.

<sup>97</sup> JC 31/12/1943, p. 1, 5.

American Jewish chaplains repeatedly expressed appreciation for hospitality and assistance.<sup>98</sup> American troops presented plaques of appreciation to a number of communities including Bristol, Portsmouth, Birmingham and Reading<sup>99</sup>, as did the chaplain to the Czechoslovak forces on his departure from Britain after five years.<sup>100</sup>

#### 11.12. Services around the World

In December 1941 the *Jewish Chronicle* published accounts which it had received of Sabbath and festival services held around the world. In Abyssinia some twenty South African soldiers held Holy Day services with the eight poor but very hospitable Jewish families in the small town of Diredawa. In Egypt Kol Nidrei and Yom Kippur services were conducted by Rev. Levy and Rabbi Brodie for two to three hundred people. In Iceland some fifty American soldiers made a collection on order to hire a hall, and nearly two hundred people attended festival services, including British soldiers and sailors and three German refugee families who had settled there. In Iraq some fifty British soldiers and airmen together with Palestinian soldiers of all European nationalities were hosted by the Baghdad Jewish Community. In Papua Australian soldiers and airmen improvised a Rosh Hashanah service and hoped to muster a minyan for Yom Kippur. In Syria some sixty to seventy British and Imperial troops gathered to celebrate the festival amidst the warmest Oriental hospitality. In Freetown in Sierra Leone in West Africa some fifteen British, South African and Rhodesian soldiers, sailors and airmen and some civilians gathered in a private house for Rosh Hashanah services and Kiddush and for Yom Kippur services and a communal meal, everybody signing copies of a souvenir of the occasion. On a

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<sup>98</sup> JC 6/10/1944, p. 18; 17/11/1944, p. 19; 15/12/1944, p. 14.

<sup>99</sup> JC 30/3/1945, p. 10; 8/6/1945, p. 12; 17/8/1945, p. 12.

<sup>100</sup> JC 27/7/1945, p. 14.

troopship two NCOs organised two Friday evening services, one attended by a Church of England padre, enabling people who wished to do so to say Kaddish. “I was struck by the great response these services had, (continues the Sergeant). More so when some men freely confessed having entered the Army under a different religious denomination, they suddenly realised that they had been better served for their peace of mind had they entered as Jews. Now we all look forward to Friday evening as an event in the week, and one which we hope will be of lasting value to all those participating.”<sup>101</sup>

### 11.13. North Africa

Rev. Isaac Levy (14 September 1910 – 31 March 2005) volunteered in September 1939 and was the first Jewish minister to do so. He served as a civilian officiating chaplain, and from February 1940 as a chaplain in Southern Command.<sup>102</sup>

Levy recorded that generally the army behaved superbly well to Jews. From Christian colleagues and commanding officers he invariably met only goodwill and respect for the dietary and other requirements of Orthodox Jewish soldiers, for whom kosher sausages were supplied. It was not uncommon for him to be invited to lunch in the officers’ mess and to discover that every officer had been given a meatless menu in order that as the Jewish padre he should not feel embarrassed at being the “odd man out”. He never encountered any antisemitism from officers; when on occasion it was reported by soldiers, Levy went to their commanding officer. He spent Rosh Hashanah of 1940 with a company of “non-British” members of the

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<sup>101</sup> JC 26/12/1941, pp. 1, 5, 15.

<sup>102</sup> LD3 pp. 146-148. IWM 11572 (Levy). *Everything in the Garden*, pp. 11, 13. VC/5/136-143. LMA, ACC/2712/15/2075. LL 7/4/1940, 1/5/1940. *Menorah* magazine, issues 15/2, September 1966, pp. 11-14; 22/1, April 1973, pp. 14-16. JC 9/2/1940, p. 23; 29/3/1940, p. 28; 30/8/1940, p. 13; 25/8/1944, p. 15; 15/4/2005, p.41 (obituary).

AMPC - perhaps the Palestinian companies who had served with the BEF in Europe and been evacuated. In the adjacent field was encamped a battalion of British infantry which included two Jews. When its C.O. learned during the first day of the festival of the special New Year services held in a nearby hall, he provided his military band on the second day to march the Jewish soldiers to the service and back. "If any good omen is needed for the commencement of a New Year in military service this wonderful gesture is not a little encouraging", Levy wrote.<sup>103</sup>

On 2 August 1941 Levy sailed in a convoy for North Africa.<sup>104</sup> He served across North Africa and in Egypt, Palestine and Syria until July 1944, initially under Rabinowitz as Senior Jewish Chaplain Middle East. Their relationship was tense, Levy, who was well organised and managerial, resenting what he considered Rabinowitz's poor administration, bombast and self-promotion.

On 27 May 1942 Levy was captured by the Germans but with some three hundred other prisoners escaped when shelling started and everybody scattered.<sup>105</sup> On another occasion on a drive of several hours through the Western Desert he was directed to a unit which was based right off the beaten track. This proved to be the "S.I.G." or *Himmelfahrtscommando*, a virtually entirely Jewish and highly trained Palestinian commando unit under British command which passed as German, had German uniforms and equipment and spoke only German. If caught they would have been shot out of hand. Several of the men confided to Levy their suspicion that two of their number were not Jews but Nazi agents. Levy conveyed this to the non-

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<sup>103</sup> JC 1/11/1940, p. 11.

<sup>104</sup> LD1, pp.4, 11.

<sup>105</sup> Levy, *Now I Can Tell*, pp. 59-64. JC 3/7/1942, p. 9.

Jewish commanding officer, who rejected it. Later, at the cost of the lives of many of the men, it proved to be true.<sup>106</sup>

The Palestinian contingents outnumbered the British Jewish personnel by at least seven to one. There were (on my count) twelve locally appointed Palestinian chaplains in North Africa. They seem to have been recommended by the Senior Jewish Chaplains in the Middle East; Rabbi Ephraim Raffalovitch (b. 26/5/1912) and probably others were recommended by Rabinowitz and Rabbi Aaron Zev Aescoly (25/7/1901-31/12/1948) by Levy. Levy's recurrent complaints about most of them were that they were unreliable, did not accept discipline or team working, prioritised Palestinian over British soldiers and because of their Zionism engaged in activities which the British authorities considered political and whose aims they could sometimes have achieved more subtly.

There were at different stages eight other British chaplains in North Africa. Six were Army: Revs. Myer Berman, Solly Hooker, Isaac Rapaport, Harry Bornstein (who died on 28 November 1943), Maurice Jaffe and Isaac Fabricant. Two were RAF: Rabbi Israel Brodie was senior Jewish Chaplain to the RAF in the Middle East, and on his return to London in the autumn of 1943 was succeeded in that role by Rev. Eli Cashdan. Levy's diaries also refer to American chaplains Freedman and Rabbi Lazarus Morris Goldman, Australian chaplain Jacob L. Goldman and South African chaplain Simon Weinstein.

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<sup>106</sup> Levy, *Now I Can Tell*, pp. 49-50. JHS, vol. 35 (1996-1998), Martin Sugarman, *The S.I.G: behind the lines with Jewish commandos*, pp. 287-307 at 288-289. Sugarman, *Fighting Back*, pp. 155-156. Morris and Sugarman, *We Will Remember Them*, pp. 245-246.



In July 1941<sup>107</sup> and on 2 April 1943<sup>108</sup>, 30 June 1943<sup>109</sup> and 31 January 1944<sup>110</sup> there were conferences of all of the Jewish chaplains of the MEF. At the last Levy noted that the American chaplain Freedman who attended “admitted that such a conference could never have been held in America without there being a hopeless row, nor did he imagine that we had so many problems facing us as were discussed that day. His work assumed a new light in comparison with the matters which were raised by us.”

In February 1944 Levy had his first experience with the Royal Navy, whose staff officers were exceedingly helpful over attempts to arrange for the supply of matza for Pesach and over an outbreak of hostility towards Palestinian sailors. He recorded that:

Shertok<sup>111</sup> informed me that the Navy have asked for the appointment of a chaplain. This would be desirable but the tragedy is that there is no one in Palestine who is suited for the post. He would have to speak English perfectly and have the right sense of approach to so traditional a service. If we cannot find the right type for the army how much more difficult for the navy. But should such incidents occur it would be advisable that some effort be made to find the right person. His job would be an enviable one since the Navy on the whole are a delightful set of people to work with.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> JC 17/7/1942, p. 1.

<sup>108</sup> LD3 pp. 7, 17.

<sup>109</sup> LD3 pp.37-38. LL 3/7/1943, 5/7/1943.

<sup>110</sup> LD3 pp. 96-97.

<sup>111</sup> A prominent figure in the Jewish leadership in Palestine, later becoming known as Moshe Sharrett.

<sup>112</sup> LD3 p. 104 (between 7 and 11 February 1944).

In January 1945 Rev. M. Berman, described in the press as Senior Jewish Chaplain, Allied Command, appointed Lieutenant Raphael D. de Sola RNVR as Acting Jewish Chaplain and Welfare Officer for the Algiers District. De Sola was also appointed an extra chazan of the Algiers Jewish Community, and officiated regularly at different synagogues in Algiers.<sup>113</sup> The Jewish community of Algiers extended Passover hospitality through de Sola to Jewish troops.<sup>114</sup> When they could, chaplains identified men able to conduct services in their unit; driver Wolfe Morris, RASC did so whilst serving in North Africa as a driver and interpreter.<sup>115</sup> In Nigeria in 1945 Corporal I. Shindler of the West African Force organised for the second time Seder services for Jewish personnel, which were attended by seventeen people.<sup>116</sup>

#### 11.14. The Succession to Senior Jewish Chaplain

Late in 1939 or early in 1940 Rabbi Dr. I. Leslie Edgar (24 (or 20) September 1905 - 21 February 1984) of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in London was invited by SJC Gollop to become a Jewish chaplain. He declined, fearing that, with still so much prejudice against Liberal Jews, his appointment might lead to undesirable controversy, which the War Office might be drawn into. Some months later he was asked to see Gollop again, to be told by Gollop and a lay member of the JWSC that, to their great pleasure and somewhat to their surprise, the War Office had authorised a substantial increase in the number of Jewish chaplains, and that they were having considerable difficulty finding sufficient suitable Jewish ministers. He wrote:

I said that, in the circumstances, I felt I would have to reconsider. But, I pointed out to Dayan Gollop, I was much concerned about one religious

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<sup>113</sup> JC 19/1/1945, p. 9.

<sup>114</sup> JC 9/3/1945, p. 6.

<sup>115</sup> *Forum*, Magazine of Bushey Synagogue, Pesach 2006.

<sup>116</sup> JC 20/4/1945, p. 6.

problem. I realised, of course, that as a Chaplain I would have to do my best for each Jewish man or woman according to their 'background and the way they were brought up' – if they came from an Orthodox background to do my best to encourage them in that form of Jewish loyalty and so forth – but I found it very difficult to know what to do about religious services since there were Orthodox prayers which I could not conscientiously use. I was very deeply impressed by Dayan Gollop's answer. Taking a small khaki - covered book from the left-hand drawer of his desk, he said: 'Edgar, I would have to ask you to promise me that you would not use any other prayer-book than this, which is the prayer-book officially authorised for use by Jewish servicemen and women. But I leave it to your judgement entirely which parts of the book you do or do not use'. Inwardly I thought this is the kind of man I would be proud to serve under, and although I did not give my decision to enter the Chaplaincy until a few weeks later, and after much thought, I think I had really decided at that moment.<sup>117</sup>

Appointed a chaplain from 1 July 1940, Edgar served in the Western Command, based at Oswestry and then at Chester. Then appointed to the Scottish Command headquartered in Edinburgh, he spent most of his time in the remoter parts of Scotland, visiting gun sites and airfields, including isolated units in the Orkneys and Shetlands and the even more isolated small islands and the ships which came into Scapa Flow. He found that the army authorities were always very helpful, and that being a Liberal Jew caused him no difficulty. At a chaplaincy conference an Orthodox chaplain said to him: "You know, Edgar, you are a positive menace.

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<sup>117</sup> Edgar, *Some Memories of My Ministry*, p.21.

Orthodox Jews come to me after they have been in your Command, and I find that you have got concessions for them which I couldn't get for them and wouldn't if I could!" Edgar explained to him that he well knew that he often got for them more than was their strict due under the service regulations. But he would not have any Orthodox Jew feeling that he had been prejudiced by being under a Jewish chaplain who was Liberal Jew. He would explain to commanding officers that, just as within Christianity, there were religious distinctions within Judaism, and it would not do for an Orthodox Jew to feel that he was being prejudiced by having a Liberal Jew as a chaplain, so would the CO do as much as he possibly could under the regulations. The innate sense of justice and respect for religion felt universally by officers always resulted in a very generous response.

In October 1942 Gollop was promoted to Chaplain to the Forces Second Class, with the equivalent rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.<sup>118</sup> In November 1942 he was awarded the Efficiency Decoration.<sup>119</sup> A reference to him by rank in the press led him to point out that British chaplains should not be so referred to as their ranks were purely relative.<sup>120</sup> In the autumn of 1943 Gollop became seriously ill.<sup>121</sup> Asked to call upon Gollop at his home in London, Edgar was shocked to find him in bed and obviously very ill. Gollop said that he believed that he would get better and wanted to keep his position open so that he could take it up again. Meanwhile he wanted to recommend to the War Office that Edgar be appointed as his deputy. Edgar begged Gollop not to do this; Gollop had so many Orthodox chaplains to choose from, and it was bound to cause great trouble and controversy within the Jewish community. Gollop was

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<sup>118</sup> JC 16/10/1942, p. 9.

<sup>119</sup> JC 27/11/1942, p. 13.

<sup>120</sup> JC 19/2/1943, p.1; 26/2/1943, p. 12.

<sup>121</sup> JC 29/10/1943, p. 11; 24/12/1943, p.11.

adamant: “ ‘I want you to do it’, he said, ‘because I trust you and my mind will be at ease’.” With considerable misgivings, Edgar acceded, and was posted to work in the Senior Chaplain’s Office.<sup>122</sup>

The controversy was not long in coming. On 10 November 1943, Chief Rabbi Hertz wrote to the War Office. The chairman of the JWSC, he wrote, had without the Chief Rabbi’s knowledge appointed a locum tenens who was quite unacceptable to him. The Chief Rabbi had a clear duty to undertake reconstruction of the JWSC unless they were prepared to respect his decisions in religious matters like the appointment of a senior Jewish chaplain or his deputy. On 29 November 1943 he wrote to the secretary of the JWSC, Donald H. Cohen: “The appointment of a Liberal Minister to act for Dayan Gollop during his illness cannot be recognised by me, and calls for a solemn protest on my part.” He went on that there were eighteen Orthodox chaplains then in England, among them men eminently suited for the work, like Major Rabinowitz and Rev. A. S. Super; Orthodox Jewry furnished 97% of the Jewish men in H.M. Forces and the senior chaplain in control of army religious activities should be Orthodox; the appointment had been made without the knowledge of the Chief Rabbi; and if, as was suggested, Dayan Gollop had named Rev. Edgar for the post, he had had no right to do so. Cohen replied on 1 December that the Committee at its meeting the previous day had received the Chief Rabbi’s letter with very deep distress. Dayan Gollop had felt it necessary to ask someone to carry on his work during his absence and was entirely within his military rights to make his own selection and arrangements. However before doing so and after he had been ordered to bed with his heart attack he had asked the chairman and Mr Cohen to

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<sup>122</sup> JC 26/11/1943, p. 13.

visit him in order to explain his intention and to ask for their concurrence. This they had given, and the Committee had ratified their decision. Any protest by the Chief Rabbi to the Army Council would be very unfair to Gollop and prejudicial to the community. Edgar would not give any decision on matters regarding Orthodox ritual or religion without first consulting an Orthodox authority.

On 14 December 1943 the Deputy Chaplain General, L. Gethin Hughes, minuted the War Office file that the letter from the Chief Rabbi of 10 November might cause a certain amount of difficulty. Rev. L. I. Edgar, who at Dayan Gollop's suggestion and with the approval of the RACHD was acting in Gollop's absence, was "a man of pronounced ability and great personal charm who is probably one of the most effective of the Jewish chaplains. So far as we are concerned he has already shown that he is a most efficient deputy for Dayan Gollop. Mr Edgar is however a Liberal Jew and a Modernist, which may account for the Chief Rabbi's objection." Hughes anticipated that Gollop's place would be taken by the next most senior Jewish chaplain, Rabbi L. Rabinowitz. This he considered should be opposed, for reasons discussed below.<sup>123</sup> The Chief Rabbi might of course propose something entirely different.

In a letter of 20 December 1943, Hertz nominated First World War chaplain Rev. Arthur Barnett, who was again serving as a chaplain, to be Gollop's locum tenens until his recovery, to which on 22 December the Army Council agreed. The controversy escalated, and over several weeks an increasing number of servicemen wrote to the press, some to support and some to oppose Edgar's appointment.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> I discuss this in section 11.15.

<sup>124</sup> JC 10/12/1943, pp. 8, 9; 17/12/1943, p. 14; 24/12/1943, p. 15; 31/12/1943, p. 13; 14/1/1944, p.13; 21/1/1944, p. 15.

The JWSC met urgently on Wednesday, 29 December. In a lengthy meeting Hertz and Dr Bernard Homa gradually carried the day against the view of the majority. As Homa wrote, "Edgar had to go". As it would have been highly offensive to dismiss him the very next day, the change was to be made during January.

Seriously ill, Gollop spent some months in hospital. In January 1944 he was assessed permanently unfit for service. Released from hospital in February 1944 to convalesce, he was obliged to resign as Senior Jewish Chaplain and as minister of the Hampstead Synagogue.<sup>125</sup> The *Jewish Chronicle* applauded his conscientious service, and the Deputy Chaplain General conveyed thanks for his services.<sup>126</sup> On 14 March 1944 Gollop relinquished his commission through ill-health, retiring as the first Jewish chaplain to attain the status of chaplain second class with the equivalent rank of lieutenant-colonel.

As Gollop's successor the JWSC proposed, with the approval of the Chief Rabbi and the President of the United Synagogue, Rabbi Israel Brodie, B.A., B. Litt., D. Phil. Brodie had first served as a chaplain on the western front in the First World War. After being evacuated with the B.E.F. in 1940 he served within Southern Command at Aldershot and then within Scottish Command. On 10 December 1940 he was "translated" into the RAF as its first Jewish chaplain, with the relative rank of Squadron Leader and was appointed as the Jewish chaplain in RAF Middle East. He served in the Western Desert, later becoming Senior Jewish Chaplain in RAF Middle East.<sup>127</sup> He was mentioned in despatches, apparently for his service at Tobruk.<sup>128</sup> On

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<sup>125</sup> JC 18/2/1944, p.1.

<sup>126</sup> JC 18/2/1944, p. 10; 25/2/1944, p. 7.

<sup>127</sup> JC 28/6/1940, p. 11; 15/11/1940, p. 13; 13/12/1940, p. 1.

<sup>128</sup> *The London Gazette*, 2 June 1944, p.2615, col. 2; 13 June 1944, p. 2876, col. 2 (correcting the first entry which stated that he was deceased). There is some

15 March 1944 he was duly “translated” back into the army to become the Senior Jewish Chaplain, in the acting rank of Chaplain Third Class and the local rank of Chaplain Second Class, which Gollop had held, with the equivalent rank of lieutenant-colonel (but on the pay of a Chaplain Third Class). He was correspondingly appointed the army chaplain in charge of Jewish Interests in the Air Force. The controversy over, Edgar stood down and applied for the next available overseas posting, which was granted after the invasion of Europe.<sup>129</sup>

In August 1944 Brodie had an operation, for which he was on sick leave.<sup>130</sup> As Senior Jewish Chaplain he visited troops, in November 1944 in Europe, in March 1945 in Italy, in August 1945 in the Far East and from probably 16 September until 8 October 1945 in Germany. Following the death of Hertz in 1946 he became Chief Rabbi in 1948, standing down as Senior Jewish Chaplain and leaving the army in June 1948 and retiring in 1965.<sup>131</sup>

#### 11.15. Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz (24 May 1906 – 7 August 1984)

Brodie was not the automatic appointee as Senior Jewish Chaplain. The most senior Jewish chaplain after Gollop was Rabbi Dr. Louis Rabinowitz (24 May 1906 - 7 August 1984) of Cricklewood Synagogue in London. A powerful and forthright personality with both supporters and opponents, he was an obvious candidate. He had been commissioned as a Territorial Army chaplain in 1929 and was called up on

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suggestion of a second mention in despatches, apparently for having parachuted into Burma, but this cannot be located and seems unlikely.

<sup>129</sup> National Archives, file WO/32/12467. Homa, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, pp.1-2, 57, 104 -117, 196-214. Edgar, *Some Memories of My Ministry*, pp. 20-27. Robinson, *Chaplains at War*, pp.70-71. Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp. 334, 407 nn. 497- 499. JC 24/3/1944, p. 1.

<sup>130</sup> LMA, ACC/3400/02/05/041.

<sup>131</sup> Morris, *The Ajax Chronicles*, p. 81. Israel Brodie’s nephews in conversation with me: Stanley Brodie QC 24/11/2014 and 5/12/2014 and Michael Garston 19/10/1914.



26 October 1939. Initially attached to a field ambulance, he served in the Eastern Command in Bedfordshire and then in the Scottish Command in the Edinburgh area. Throughout his military career he wrote periodically to the press about his work. The *Jewish Chronicle* of 29 March 1940 published a long article under the title *Some Experiences of a Jewish Chaplain* about some of his more extraordinary and whimsical experiences among the wide range of Jews whom a Jewish chaplain encountered.<sup>132</sup>

Rabinowitz served as the Senior (and initially the only) Jewish Chaplain in the Middle East from May 1941 until July 1943, successively in the Canal area, the Alexandria area, Palestine, the Alexandria area again and the Tripoli area. He wrote that he spent one Rosh Hashanah at Alamein, one Yom Kippur in Cyprus, one Chanukah on the outskirts of Tobruk attended by a thousand Palestinian soldiers and a score of officers, one Purim and Passover at Tripoli and one Shavuot in the grilling heat of Qena in Upper Egypt and the next in Malta.<sup>133</sup>

After the campaign in North Africa Rabinowitz made the decision in April 1943 to stay with 8<sup>th</sup> Army rather than to remain in the Middle East, and served with 30 Corps of 8<sup>th</sup> Army on what is recorded as “special duties”.<sup>134</sup> After protracted administrative confusion Levy was promoted in March 1943 to Senior Jewish Chaplain Middle East in the acting local rank of major.<sup>135</sup> Rabinowitz knew, when Levy met with him on 2 June 1943, that he had upset both Gollop, to whom he had sent “snorters”, and the

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<sup>132</sup> VC/5/82. JC 19/1/1939, supplement p. 9; 21/7/1939, p. 29; 17/11/1939, p. 8; 29/3/1940, pp.7-8; 16/8/1940, p. 13; 22/9/1944, p.5. Bolchover, *British Jewry and the Holocaust*, p. 40.

<sup>133</sup> Rabinowitz, *Soldiers from Judea*, p. 70.

<sup>134</sup> ACC.

<sup>135</sup> LL 18/3/1943. JC 2/4/1943, p. 15. Levy, *Now I Can Tell*, p. 122.

Staff Chaplain at GHQ, Edlin, both of whom did not like him.<sup>136</sup> On 11 June 1943 Levy saw Edlin, to be told that Rabinowitz had made a nuisance of himself in the MEF, that there was no desire to have him back and that he would stay with 8<sup>th</sup> Army. Edlin told Levy to continue to keep in touch with him on all matters. Levy gathered that Rabinowitz seemed to have well and truly blotted his copy book in the office of the DCG. Rabinowitz had gone to Cairo in order to attempt to obtain a month's leave to fly to South Africa about a potential appointment there to succeed the late Chief Rabbi of Johannesburg, but this had not been granted.<sup>137</sup>

In July 1943 Rabinowitz was recalled to the UK by a cable from the War Office. Levy heard that the DCG may have reached the stage of wanting him out of the way.<sup>138</sup>

Rabinowitz arrived back in the UK on 10 September 1943.<sup>139</sup> On 27 September 1943 Levy wrote to his wife:

One more spot of news. Brodie received a letter from Rab<sup>140</sup> addressed from his home in Cricklewood. On his first Shabbas back he preached in his shule and in his letter to Brodie he informs him that he has been recalled in disgrace. That he will be sent either to Northern Ireland or to Scotland and that if he behaves himself he may go over to some European front when the time comes. I saw the letter it is written in the most bitter of terms and I must say I feel sorry for him in a way. He has blown his balloon so big and now he himself pricks it and the burst is a furious one. O that pride of man which blinds him to the truth. He sought to soar heavenward in the vain search for

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<sup>136</sup> LD3 p. 28.

<sup>137</sup> LD3 pp. 33-35. LL 4/6/1943, 5/6/1943.

<sup>138</sup> ACC. LD3 pp. 36, 40-41. LL 15/6/1943, 5/7/1943, 12/7/1943.

<sup>139</sup> ACC. JC 24/9/1943, p. 11.

<sup>140</sup> Rabinowitz's nickname.

glory and he has been sent back under such a cloud of ill favour. G[ollop] apparently told him that the War Office was informed of his disloyalty to G[ollop] and that the D.C.G., M.E.F. preferred his room to his company. The latter is the biggest blow of all and Rab cannot [but] realise that this is the case.<sup>141</sup>

On 5 October 1943 Rabinowitz went to Northern Ireland. Doubtless there were Jewish troops in Northern Ireland, and doubtless their religious needs were able to be met by the Belfast Jewish community, whose Rabbi J. Schachter was an officiating clergyman. So this posting may indeed have been intended to see whether he could “behave himself”.

When the issue of a successor to Gollop arose, Edgar was interviewed on 9 December 1943 by Gethin Hughes and a War Office official, Mr Bedford. An undated and anonymous document classified as “very secret” and headed with Rabinowitz’s name stated that Rabinowitz’s request had been rejected for an immediate interview with the DCG, whom he could see when he was next on leave. It continued:

But Mr. Bedford told Mr. Edgar that, should Rabinowitz ever be nominated for the post of Senior Jewish Chaplain, the War Office would, despite Rabinowitz’s claim as the Territorial Chaplain, oppose that nomination. The D.C.G. concurred in this view. They did, however, intimate that this might cause the War Office difficulties, since they feared that Rabinowitz had a certain amount of political influence which would lead to pressure from political quarters, but they implied that they would simply take their stand on the records they have of Rabinowitz’s service.

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<sup>141</sup> LL 27/9/1943.

Anticipating the nomination of Rabinowitz as the next most senior Jewish chaplain, Gethin Hughes minuted the War Office file, as stated, on 14 December 1943. He wrote:

Unfortunately Rabinowitch [*sic*] had been recalled by us from the Middle East, at Dayan Gollop's request, because he had consistently ignored Dayan Gollop's instructions on Jewish chaplaincy matters. Moreover you may remember that there was a somewhat disturbing matter concerning Rabinowitch in connection with his conduct on the voyage home. This was reported to Dayan Gollop who took the gravest view of the situation, but you considered after consulting D. P. S., that no disciplinary action could be taken – I enclose the file.<sup>142</sup>

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Dayan Gollop considered however, and we agreed with him, that Rabinowitch would be most unsuitable to act as his deputy even in a temporary capacity.

I do not know how the Chief Rabbi proposes to solve this problem but if he should contemplate appointing Rabinowitch vice Edgar we must, I feel, object to the suggestion for the reasons I have already stated. It may be of course that he will propose something entirely different.<sup>143</sup>

In North Africa, Rabinowitz had been presented to General Montgomery in around January 1943. He had taken the opportunity to say that three more Jewish chaplains were needed, prompting a stiff letter from Montgomery to GHQ, which had irritated the senior chaplaincy in North Africa. There is a suggestion, impossible to verify, that

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<sup>142</sup> The file referred to does not survive, and I cannot identify the incident of misconduct.

<sup>143</sup> National Archives, file WO/32/12467.

after the death of Hertz in January 1946 Montgomery had written to the Prime Minister saying that, despite having been recalled from North Africa in some disgrace, Rabinowitz should still be considered for the position of Chief Rabbi.<sup>144</sup> So in December 1943, and again in January 1946, Rabinowitz's political patron may have been Montgomery. This is plausible; the son of a bishop, Montgomery valued his army chaplains and had lobbied hard and successfully in the autumn of 1944 for the appointment as Chaplain General of his protégé in North Africa, Frederick Llewelyn Hughes.<sup>145</sup>

From Northern Ireland Rabinowitz went in 1944, probably in January<sup>146</sup>, to the Eastern Command in the Norfolk/Cambridgeshire District. On 10 May 1944 he was posted to 21<sup>st</sup> Army Group and to the Headquarters of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army. In June 1944 he accepted appointment as the minister of the Great Synagogue in Johannesburg in South Africa. The *Jewish Chronicle* wrote: "Rabbi Rabinowitz won fame as the Jewish Chaplain of the Eighth Army, with which body he went all through the North African campaign. He was subsequently recalled to this country for important services in pending operations."<sup>147</sup>

On 17 June 1944 Rabinowitz embarked with the Headquarters of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army within 21<sup>st</sup> Army Group for North West Europe.<sup>148</sup> He conducted many services. On Yom Kippur the Army sent a jeep to take two soldiers, one from London named Gardner, over fifty miles to attend his services.<sup>149</sup> In September 1944 Rabinowitz wrote a

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<sup>144</sup> Information in email 31/5/2018 from Ian Rabinowitz (nephew) relaying what he had been told by a former serviceman (an officer, he believed) some twenty years previously.

<sup>145</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp. 308-309, 340.

<sup>146</sup> The Army Chaplaincy Card is difficult to read.

<sup>147</sup> JC 2/6/1944, p. 1.

<sup>148</sup> ACC.

<sup>149</sup> JC 13/12/1944, p.13; 23/8/2019, pp 8-9.

lengthy article in the *Jewish Chronicle* entitled “They were also there” listing numerous Jews who had served, and in some cases been killed, in the numerous units which participated in D-Day.<sup>150</sup>

Rabinowitz returned to Britain on 30 September 1944. He was temporarily attached to London District Headquarters and resigned his commission on 14 October 1944.<sup>151</sup> Preaching in his synagogue in Cricklewood on the first day of Succot, which was 2 October, he said that he had been with forward units of the Army which had been temporarily cut off by German counter-attacks on the flanks during the frantic efforts to reach the Airborne troops at Arnhem, and that at the Nijmegen bridgehead he had conducted well attended Holy Day services in the synagogue in Nijmegen after it had been cleared of stored German loot.<sup>152</sup> In a talk entitled “I seek my brethren” in November 1944 he said that he had visited the horrific concentration camp at Breendonck.<sup>153</sup>

Rev. Isaac Levy, after three weeks leave in Britain on his return from North Africa, was posted to Europe as the Senior Jewish Chaplain in the British 2<sup>nd</sup> Army in Europe. He landed on the day on which Rabinowitz departed, 30 September 1944.<sup>154</sup> On 6 October he learned that in order to get his promotion - what promotion is not stated - Rabinowitz had informed “A” Branch that as Senior Chaplain he was not subject to the administration of the Chaplains’ Department but came directly under “A” Branch, and had therefore asked for recognition of his own status. Meanwhile he had been arranging with London for his departure from the service.

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<sup>150</sup> JC 22/9/1944, p. 5.

<sup>151</sup> ACC.

<sup>152</sup> JC 29/9/1944, p. 3; 6/10/1944, p. 1.

<sup>153</sup> JC 10/11/1944, p. 11.

<sup>154</sup> Levy, *Now I Can Tell*, p. 174. LD4 pp.1-2. LL 22/9/1944, 11/10/1944.

This had naturally left a very unpleasant impression in the Office of the Deputy Chaplain General. "It appears that everyone was thoroughly fed up with him and heaved a sigh of relief when he departed."<sup>155</sup> Chaplaincy, however, was the purview of the RACHD, whose senior echelon in the Middle East Rabinowitz had antagonised. So liaison with A Branch over his status may have been an attempt by Rabinowitz to circumvent the authority of the RACHD and to assert his independence of it. In this he may have seen a precedent in Roman Catholic chaplaincy, which in 1940 had reasserted its separatism from the unified system of army chaplaincy, fracturing the unity of the RACHD throughout the war.<sup>156</sup>

In an otherwise unrelated book published in 1952 (about a mission to the Far East which he had undertaken at some point after 1948, several years after he had left the army) Rabinowitz gave an account of the circumstances of his departure from Europe.<sup>157</sup> He wrote that having gone through the North African campaign from Alamein to Tunis he had been recalled in 1944<sup>158</sup> in order to be appointed Senior Jewish Chaplain to the British Liberation Army. He had landed on the Normandy beaches on D + 6<sup>159</sup> and had been present at the Battle of the Beachhead and the Bulge and then the liberation of North France, Belgium and Holland. Just when his feet trod the accursed soil of Germany<sup>160</sup> and he had been looking forward to being in "at the kill", he had received his discharge from the Army. This had been engineered by the Chief Rabbi of England in response to an urgent request from

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<sup>155</sup> LD4, p. 7. "A", the Adjutant-General's, Branch of the Army, dealt with personnel matters. The other Branches were G, which dealt with operations, and Q, with material.

<sup>156</sup> Section 6.7. Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, pp. 291-2, 334, 340.

<sup>157</sup> Rabinowitz, *Far East Mission*, p. 183.

<sup>158</sup> An error for 1943.

<sup>159</sup> An error if his Army Chaplaincy Card is correct in recording him to have landed on D+11.

<sup>160</sup> Which the Allies first entered on 15 September 1944.

Johannesburg that he be enabled to take up his new appointment there at the earliest possible moment. The application had been made over his head, and he had had no redress. It had always rankled in his mind that it had not been given to him to “finish the job” and to play whatever part he might be called upon or might come his way to help in the rescue of survivors of the Nazi holocaust <sup>161</sup>.

Rabinowitz’s explanation of his involuntary removal from the army raises questions. It contradicted his own contemporary acknowledgement to Brodie that he had been recalled from the Middle East in disgrace, and glossed over his period in Northern Ireland and the reason for it. By June 1944 he had the offer of the post in Johannesburg. Everything was subordinated to the war effort, and the community there would have had to wait for him. Even if they did request Chief Rabbi Hertz to release him as soon as he could, Hertz would have had to consult SJC Brodie, who had served alongside Rabinowitz in the Middle East and well knew his strengths and weaknesses. With still a desperate shortage of Jewish chaplains, Brodie had no apparent operational reason to release so experienced a chaplain unless perhaps he had concluded that Rabinowitz was more trouble than he was worth. This is possible but probably unlikely, as nobody doubted Rabinowitz’s energy and rapport with the troops. Perhaps with foresight Brodie saw an opportunity to accelerate the departure from Britain of a man whom he may have considered unsuitable to succeed Hertz, who was then aged 72, as Chief Rabbi. Brodie may indeed have viewed himself as a candidate and Rabinowitz as a potential rival for the post. Hertz died in 1946, and was indeed succeeded in 1948 by Brodie. So the initiative for Rabinowitz to leave

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<sup>161</sup> A term which had not then assumed its present significance.



the army may, as Levy learned at the time, have been that of Rabinowitz himself, later to be rationalised as external and involuntary.

#### 11.16. The Servicemen of Sunderland

In July 1942 the minister of the Sunderland Jewish Community, which was traditionally Orthodox, Rev S. P. Toperoff, took it upon himself to produce a monthly bulletin and to send it to every Jewish serviceman from Sunderland who was serving anywhere in the world. The “Bulletin for the Forces” contained local news and letters from servicemen and women. It was issued every month until January 1946, when the final issue included a tribute from SJC Brodie.<sup>162</sup> It represents a vivid record of the situations, hopes and apprehensions of some one hundred and thirty servicemen and women from Sunderland, five of whom lost their lives.

The Bulletin for the Forces contains various references to chaplaincy. Their significance is that they afford a spectrum of experiences and views from Jewish servicemen in different theatres and at different stages of the war about the provision of Jewish chaplaincy services. Recurrent themes are the shortage of chaplains and religious provision for British Jewish soldiers and the warmth of the Americans, more numerous and better equipped with chaplains and religious requisites, in welcoming the British to High Holyday and Passover services and events.

In December 1943 Leading Aircraftsman Charles Gillis of the Central Mediterranean Force wrote that in a city in Sicily he had been able to attend Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services organised by the American Forces Chaplain and attended by at least a thousand American soldiers, which were very impressive and carried on more

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<sup>162</sup> Davis, *Sunderland Jewry at War*, p. 316.

or less in the Orthodox manner.<sup>163</sup> Also in December 1943 Corporal Myer Davis from the British North Africa Force described having managed to attend for an hour in the morning an all day Yom Kippur service at the American Red Cross attended by over five hundred American soldiers, sailors, airmen and nurses and about a dozen British soldiers. Surprisingly to him the service was read by a British chaplain. Davis and the other British soldiers were not able to speak to the British chaplain, and were disappointed that he made no attempt to contact them after the service. Although Davis had been in North Africa for nearly twelve months, from Algiers to Tunis, this was the first occasion when he had seen a British Jewish chaplain. The American Jewish chaplains were numerous, as there were many more Jewish Americans than British, and Davis had received from them, without having asked, a parcel containing a Bible, prayer book, reading matter and a small mezuzah. By contrast, nothing was done by the British Jewish authorities to help the Jewish soldier from the religious point of view except the monthly Sunderland Bulletins. Davis felt that the authorities in London had made a mistake in not providing as well as did the other religious denominations sufficient religious interest and guidance for their flock.<sup>164</sup>

In January 1944 Leading Aircraftsman Julius Gordon of the British North Africa Force wrote that Rev. Berman of the First Army had conducted Anglo-American services in the palatial Opera House for the High Holydays. Gordon had enjoyed excellent hospitality over this period, although this had not been the result of the efforts or organisation of the Consistoire Israelite of North African Jewry nor of Rev. Berman. "Which brings me, in conclusion, to what has been, and is, a question burning within

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<sup>163</sup> *ibid.* p. 123

<sup>164</sup> *ibid.* p. 124.

me – the problem of the adequacy or otherwise of the efforts or lack of them, of the Jewish Chaplains on behalf of their personnel. Maybe I've just been unfortunate in this respect but I regret to say it has been my experience all along to find what I can only presume to be a deplorable disinterestedness in their important work – or is it bad organisation or even a paucity in their numerical strength?"<sup>165</sup> The editor emphasised that this was a problem which certainly deserved careful attention.<sup>166</sup> In May 1944 Corporal Norman M. Cohen of the Central Mediterranean Force, serving in the same theatre of war as Julius Gordon, commented upon his letter. With a better appreciation of the reality of the situation, Cohen wrote that he had come into contact with Jewish chaplains on a few occasions, most memorably at a thanksgiving service at Tunis shortly after the North African campaign. Jewish chaplains had a much more difficult job to do than Christian chaplains as Jewish soldiers and airmen were spread out in twos and threes all over a theatre of operations and chaplains were allotted according to the numbers of a faith and not the territory over which they were spread.<sup>167</sup>

From India Sergeant Issy Levine of the India Command described in detail in April 1944 the Pesach and Seder services which he had attended at the Marina Hotel in Delhi. Conducted by the American Jewish chaplain, Rev. Horowitz from New York, the Seder services were attended by nearly two hundred servicemen, including twenty British soldiers who were made very welcome and treated by the Americans as "guests of honour". The Americans had flown out from the United States everything needed for the Seder services, which had been complete in every detail.

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<sup>165</sup> *ibid.* pp. 134-135.

<sup>166</sup> *ibid.* p. 130.

<sup>167</sup> *ibid.* p. 166.

“For me this was the very first Kosher Pesach since 1941 so you will realise what joy I felt at being present.” It was now hoped to arrange regular Shabbos morning services.<sup>168</sup> In May 1944 Levine, now a Squadron Commander, wrote that a Jewish chaplain had just arrived from the UK for service in India Command, so perhaps our spiritual welfare would be better catered for. Levine had just been told of a very lamentable case where a Jewish soldier from Leeds, unfortunately killed in a motor crash nearby, would not have been buried according to Jewish custom but for the intervention of a Jewish private of the same unit.<sup>169</sup>

In June 1944 Sick Berth Attendant Aron Goldblatt from *HMS Duke*, a hospital, whose location is not indicated, wrote that the Royal Navy places religion before anything else and that the resident chaplain who gives a lecture to each new group as it arrives takes a personal interest in everyone. Goldblatt was asked to make contact with new arrivals in order to initiate them into our circle, and hoped to organise something like a service for our men.<sup>170</sup> In July 1944 Lieutenant Mordant Cohen described having attended a Seder Service of over sixty-five people at the home of Sir David and Lady Ezra in Calcutta. Passover services were conducted in the famous Magen David Synagogue by the United States Chaplain who, observing Cohen and others staying behind to daven the Musaf service on the first day of the festival, invited them to conduct the service on the second day.<sup>171</sup>

Amongst the most regular correspondents was Corporal Joe Charlton of the South-East Asia Air Force. In June 1944 he also described having spent Passover in Calcutta. Chiefly through the efforts of the American chaplain more than five hundred

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<sup>168</sup> *ibid.* pp. 158-159.

<sup>169</sup> *ibid.* pp. 166 – 167.

<sup>170</sup> *ibid.* pp.172, 180.

<sup>171</sup> *ibid.* pp. 179-180.

American and British lads were able to spend a kosher Pesach. A first Seder night was spent in private homes; the second was a huge communal Seder attended by about six hundred lads. There were services in the synagogue throughout the festival, and a full programme of entertainments. The thanks of the British in Calcutta were due to the Americans for unselfishly sharing their chaplain and their supply of American matzos, which had been shipped over for them.<sup>172</sup> Addressing in September 1944 the issue of the lack of chaplains, Charlton suggested the coordination of the UK and American Jewish Welfare Boards, enabling British and American chaplains to go to all of the Jewish troops in their area. Jewish chaplains had to get mobile, and Jewish servicemen had to be informed of the facilities for Jewish worship and recreation in their particular theatre.<sup>173</sup>

In December 1944 Charlton described the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services in Calcutta. Because there had been too many lads to get into the shul on Yom Kippur two services had been held. One was a shortened service conducted by a chaplain and attended mainly by the American troops. The other was an overflow service conducted by Lieutenant Lancer from London helped by Private Dave Morris from Barrow, which was a full service. One morning in the days before Yom Kippur Charlton had the unique experience of learning “Blat Gemorra” (Talmud commentary) with Lieutenant Lancer in the amazing library of Hebraic books which they found in a synagogue in a purely native quarter of Calcutta. The shamas of the synagogue pressed them to spend Yom Kippur with the community in prayer, and it had been really hard to refuse.<sup>174</sup> In May 1945 Charlton wrote that he had very

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<sup>172</sup> *ibid.* p. 172.

<sup>173</sup> *ibid.* p. 197.

<sup>174</sup> *ibid.* pp. 221-222.

recently received from the Chaplains' Office a copy of the monthly news sheet, *Shalom*, which was the new organ of the Jewish troops of the South-East Asia Command. He could however say with pride that the Sunderland Bulletin had yet to be surpassed either by *Shalom* or by its American equivalent, *The Judean*.<sup>175</sup>

From Europe, Driver Gillis (there were six Sunderland Jewish servicemen of that surname) of the British Liberation Army wrote in August 1944 that he had the good fortune to get to a Jewish service in one of the towns conducted by Rabbi Rabinowitz and attended by Jews from England, Scotland and Canada, who had come together in a Catholic church. Rabinowitz gave a sermon on the Parsha and alluded to our coming tasks. There were three women, two old and one young, who were the remnants of the Jewish population of this whole area. In this particular town there had been before the war a Jewish population of one hundred and twenty-one. All but one had been led away to a pitiless death somewhere in Poland. One, a girl, had been hidden during the German occupation. Her liberation had made her very happy. Her name was Shalom Simcha. The chaplain told us that when he explained to her the meaning of her name (which is peace and joy) she had cried in happiness. Nearby were a few new cemeteries. In one of them Gillis found the grave of Lance Sergeant Zimmerman of the Royal Engineers, with a white wooden Magen David erected by his company. Gillis said a quiet *El Mole Rachamim* for him and stood in tribute to him.<sup>176</sup> In January 1945 Sergeant Sam Freeman of the BLA wrote that he had taken the opportunity to attend a Chanukah service in a small town in Holland. Private Claude Brewer of the Central Mediterranean Force wrote that he had attended a large service on the first night of Chanukah in one of the large theatres in

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<sup>175</sup> *ibid.* p. 264.

<sup>176</sup> *ibid.* p. 189.

a town in Italy, which had been crowded to capacity, followed by a concert given by various members of H.M. and Allied Forces.<sup>177</sup> Leading Aircraftsman Charlie Marks of the Central Mediterranean Force referred to an earlier mention of mobile synagogues. He thought that this was a very fine practical help and asked if a chaplain was going to travel with them because if not the absence of a minister would be very greatly felt.<sup>178</sup>

#### 11.17. A Case Study: Simon Kritz (17 September 1919 - 8 March 2005)

Inevitably many Jewish servicemen and women rarely if ever encountered a Jewish chaplain throughout the war. So they were thrown back upon their own spiritual resources. Simon Kritz served in the 13<sup>th</sup> Light Field Ambulance of the Royal Army Medical Corps, attached for a period to the 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade - the "Desert Rats". He served from 3 October 1939 until 1 July 1946 in various hospitals and medical units in Britain (1939), Egypt (1939-1940), the Western Desert of North Africa (1940-1941), Burma and India (1942), Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon (1942-1944), Italy (1944), various hospital postings in Britain, some with German prisoners of war, including a posting by the War Office to a camp in Douglas in the Isle of Man "to do a special job of work" (1944-1945) and Antwerp in Belgium in the British Liberation Army, which became the British Army of the Rhine (1946). In almost seven years' service he had four periods of home leave, one in 1939 before leaving Britain and the others from 1944 during periods stationed there.

Kritz's family has preserved the dozens of letters which he wrote to his parents and grandparents throughout his service. They provide a paradigm of the efforts which had to be made by a soldier in the Second World War who was conscious of his

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<sup>177</sup> *ibid.* pp. 232-233.

<sup>178</sup> *ibid.* p. 232.

Judaism to adhere to his faith. Soldiers' letters were censored, and Kritz was very conscious of not disclosing locations or significant information. In Egypt in 1940, he found and attended the synagogue and visited the Jewish cemetery, probably in Cairo. Granted Passover leave, he attended synagogue and was accommodated with a place of honour at the table by a Jewish family. Granted leave in September for the High Holydays, he attended synagogue, having supper with the minister and a first class time and marvellous meals with a family.

For the Passover of 1941 Kritz received a marvellous letter and some matzos from the Jewish chaplain. Granted leave for the whole of Passover, he was one of seven Jewish soldiers who were looked after by the local Jewish welfare centre, which gave them gifts at the end of the festival. He attended Seder services and was accommodated for those first two nights with a wealthy Jewish family. For the other nights he slept at the synagogue. He attended services conducted by Chaplain Rev. Israel Brodie. Kritz's mobile medical unit was in the thick of the fighting in North Africa. In only one letter, much later, did he write anything of the grim reality of battlefield surgery. On leave in August 1941, Kritz was entertained by the Jewish community, which for one morning placed a car and chauffeur at his disposal. Writing in October 1941 from "the midst of nowhere", he told his family that he had received a charming letter of New Year greetings from Rabbi Rabinowitz and had written in reply. He was unable to keep the Jewish holidays and on one of those days "we were all on our toes waiting for something to come off".

By April 1942 Kritz was in Rangoon in Burma. He wrote to his family:

I think you will find me a bit changed in my outlook and ideas. I really believe, I am more religious now than I have ever been, although I can not practice my



religion. I have more than once believed that the Almighty was holding his hand over me. In the midst of battle I have been able to comfort men who I feel sure are braver than I, but thank G-d somehow when ever danger has been close at hand, something inside me makes me calm and collected. I have never spoken of this before because it is something I can not explain.

On leave in August 1942 in Bombay, Kritz went to the synagogue. It was a terrible service, with a minister who had his car outside, but there was plenty to eat and drink. Granted leave in September for the High Holydays, he attended services in Poona, which were nothing like he was used to at home. Asked back to somebody's home, he was treated very well for two days, tasting strudel for the first time in three years. Posted then to Iraq, he was promoted lance-corporal and then corporal. Highly competent at his work, keen on sports and popular, "I have a nickname in my unit and that is 'Issy'. I seem to personify all that is good as far as the Jews are concerned." The brigade Padre was most helpful in making arrangements for him, and he spent Passover of 1943 pleasantly, considering the circumstances, although it was not like being at home. In September 1943 he received a letter from the Senior Jewish Chaplain, Rev. Levy, seeking his particulars as he was keeping a record of all of the Jewish soldiers in the forces, and replied. He was unable to get leave for the High Holydays, as the circumstances did not permit. Early in 1944 he spent what he described as a marvellous leave in Palestine, most of it on a collective settlement. He expressed admiration for what was being achieved, and hinted at his own Zionist ambitions for after the war.

For many Jewish servicemen scattered around the world, a constant complaint was that they virtually never saw a Jewish chaplain. This was especially so when they

met American troops, who were better provisioned with everything, including Jewish chaplains. On 28 June 1944 Kritz wrote about this from Italy:

Another thing I have to right [*sic*] about is the question of religion. I just wonder how many ministers are in the army. All the time I have been abroad no one has ever visited my formation and yet all other denomination has a padre who visits them, now can you tell me why this is? Do you think going abroad is too hard for them or maybe they do not wish to leave a lucrative position. You wonder why I am bitter on this subject, well before the war, I heard very patriotic speeches given by our various leaders but surely actions speak louder than words.

On 9 July 1944 Kritz wrote that he had been interested to read in the *Jewish Chronicle* that another chap had written about the lack of Jewish chaplains out here. There were Jewish services held in some of the big towns but he could never get to them so people like himself were not catered for, and this would be something for him to look into when he once again joined the Jewish community back home. His parents replied, and on 1 August Kritz responded to them:

Your very welcome letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> July arrived yesterday. I shall answer your comments on the religious side of the army. In my humble opinion I think it is a liberty of Reverend Levy to give you an address for me to get hold of the senior chaplain. Perhaps you do not realise how large the 8<sup>th</sup> army is, and how difficult it is for me to go and see him, and as for writing, why should I? Surely to goodness it is the duty of our so called religious leaders to make contact with us. I think there are enough young ministers to have one to each corps, who could visit all the men in that corps at frequent intervals. Do you

know that when I was in hospital the C. E. padre from my brigade visited me and he's a grand chap and sent me books, razor blades, e.t.c. the R.C. padre is the same, a real good fellow. But it is amazing our chaplains are conspicuous by their absence. Still, after all I guess they are just paid to preach to us and they should not sacrifice anything not even a lucrative position. I am sorry if you think me a bit harsh but that's straight from the shoulder as you know I have always been that way and I mean to say the same when I come home.

Promotion was slow to come, as was transfer back to the UK for men like Kritz who had been abroad for years. Both were a constant source of frustration to him, the more so as he had repeatedly to explain to his father that in the army he could not just demand to be repatriated. Back in the UK at last, Kritz was pleased in February 1945 to be able to go to a Purim party and dinner, probably in the Isle of Man.<sup>179</sup>

#### 11.18. Other Theatres

Space permits only allusion to chaplaincy in the other major theatres. I do not therefore append most of the source material, which is copious. Essentially the other theatres afford further evidence of Jewish chaplaincy, with an inevitable shortage of Jewish chaplains and much recorded unofficial chaplaincy.

In Iceland in 1940 British, Scottish, Canadian and, in 1941, American Jewish soldiers, including a British soldier who had been court martialled for hitting a soldier in the face for making anti-semitic remarks and sent to Iceland as a punishment,

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<sup>179</sup> Letters of Simon Kritz to his family, October 1939 – March 1946. JC 24/11/2017, p. 38. Greisman, *Jews in Uniform*, pp. 112-113.

organised themselves into a community and held High Holyday services, some in 1940 led from a Jewish prayer book by a Church of England chaplain.<sup>180</sup>

### 11.19. Italy

The campaign in Italy in 1944 involved six British and five Palestinian Jewish chaplains, together with Jewish chaplains from several other Allied nations. Three of the British and three of the Palestinian chaplains served with the Jewish Brigade, as did a Church of England chaplain for the twenty per cent of the Brigade who were not Jewish. After the liberation of Rome groups of Jewish soldiers including Palestinians were received by the Pope, who blessed them in Hebrew. The Jewish world was stunned by the conversion to Catholicism of Chief Rabbi Israele Zolli of Rome and his family, who had survived the war in hiding. Some of the chaplains were caught up in this, contacting Zolli's family, addressing Italian Jews at a meeting and in the press and counselling dismayed Allied Jewish soldiers.<sup>181</sup> The Jewish Brigade did much relief work among thousands of Jewish survivors of the Holocaust who had reached Italy, in which its chaplains participated.<sup>182</sup>

### 11.20. The Far East

Over the vast area of India, Ceylon and Burma services had largely to be arranged by soldiers. The first British Jewish chaplain arrived in India in the autumn of 1943, and from then until 1948 eight (one of whom was RAF) served for varying periods,

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<sup>180</sup> JPSR, *Iceland, the Jews and Anti-Semitism, 1625-2004*, by Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsson. [fornleifor.blog.is/entry/1791178](http://fornleifor.blog.is/entry/1791178). <https://ellinbesser.com/2014/05>. Hood, *Icelandic Church Saga*. JC 8/11/1940, p.1; 6/12/1940, p. 17 (photo); 16/5/1941, p. 21; 10/10/1941, p. 13 (photo); 26/12/1941, pp. 1, 5, 15.

<sup>181</sup> Weisbord and Sillanpoa, *The Chief Rabbi, the Pope and the Holocaust*, pp. 132, 137-138, 141, 151-154. JM, files 2011.82, 2011.87. Illustration 10.

<sup>182</sup> Beckman, *The Jewish Brigade*. Casper, *With the Jewish Brigade*. Illustration 11.

travelling vast distances by air and motor transport. One, Rev. Solly Hooker (31 January 1915 - 12 February 1946) died in India of natural causes.<sup>183</sup>

In 1945 the Army and the RAF allowed aircraft to fly over advanced bases in Burma to drop Passover supplies for Jews serving in remote units. Corporal C. Berenbaum of Manchester and Privates Birnbaum and Cashefsky of London and Glasser of Liverpool, battle weary in the evening and refused Passover leave for operational reasons, were stunned to receive an air dropped Passover parcel for Jewish personnel from the American Jewish Welfare Board. They sat around two candles under a bush and took their seder on matzo and wine, praying for their loved ones at home, before their unit set out at 11.00 p.m. on an eighteen mile march in pursuit of the Japanese.<sup>184</sup> Lou Berzon, who also served in Burma, later said: "I will say one thing. The army chiefs did try and look after the Jewish lot. Would you believe it, they even airlifted Matza in one day."<sup>185</sup>

Amongst prisoners of war of the Japanese, Rabbi Chaim Nussbaum, who was a volunteer Dutch army chaplain, and Captain David Arkush RADC, a British dental officer whose father was a minister of religion, undertook the role of Jewish chaplains. They and other Jews tried to calculate the dates of festivals and made heroic efforts to negotiate with their captors to hold festival and Sabbath services and obtain food suitable for improvised Passover Seder services. In Changi camp a Jewish camp magazine was produced and the *Ohel Yaakov* (Tent of Jacob) Synagogue was built by Scottish soldiers of the Royal Engineers and dedicated in a formal ceremony attended by the Japanese on the evening of Saturday 26 August

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<sup>183</sup> Illustration 12.

<sup>184</sup> JC 20/4/1945, p. 6.

<sup>185</sup> JC 7/12/2018, p. 71 (obituary).

1944. Australian signaller Mark Heyman held a proxy Bar Mitzvah ceremony on the day of his son's Bar Mitzvah in Australia on 27 September 1944, which became known as the Bar Mitzvah on the Kwai.<sup>186</sup>

Lance-Corporal Cyril Wernick of the 4<sup>th</sup> Norfolk Regiment, who was one of the leaders of Jewish activity in Changi, survived until liberation but died in hospital in Avadi in India of extreme malnutrition on Friday 21 September 1945. Sergeant Harry Sherling, the non-commissioned officer who was officially in charge of Jewish welfare in the area, visited him in hospital and together with Corporal Macks prepared his body for burial in accordance with Jewish ritual. Sherling conducted Wernick's funeral on Monday 24 September in the presence of some thirty Jewish soldiers in the Jewish Cemetery in Kasimode in Madras and wrote a full and poignant letter to his family.<sup>187</sup>

Private Leonard Sober of the Essex Regiment was a clerk attached to the Chaplains' Branch at the headquarters of Burma Command. He maintained lists of Jewish personnel and functioned as an assistant to the chaplains, conducting and facilitating festival services in Burma between 1945 and 1947. An undated testimonial from the Deputy Assistant Chaplain General of Burma Command, Rev. W. P. B. Pitt, was highly complimentary of Sober, who after the war was ordained as a minister.<sup>188</sup>

Due to return to the UK at the end of 1946 and knowing that he would not be replaced, Rev. Barry Greenberg (b. 4 February 1911) empowered two NCOs,

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<sup>186</sup> Sugarman, *Under the Heel of the Bushido*, etc., pp. vii, 368, 370.

<sup>187</sup> MS 116/2, Papers of Cyril Wernick, University of Southampton, Hartley Library, Special Collections. They include one of the original hand-drawn and coloured invitations to the opening of the *Ohel Yaakov* Synagogue: illustration 13.

<sup>188</sup> JM, file 2014.80.17, including photographs. Corporal Leonard Finkle, RAMC, whom I interviewed on 12/2/2019, remembers Sober and his having arranged services.

Shlomo Fishman and Johnny Levy (later Lyndon) with letters of authorisation issued by GHQ as Acting Jewish Chaplains to arrange and conduct festival services for Jewish troops in India, which they did, travelling widely. They also edited a magazine for Jewish soldiers in India called *Shalom*.<sup>189</sup>

### 11.21. Europe

As well as Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz and Rev. Isaac Levy as successive SJs, seven other British chaplains, six Army and one RAF, served in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany in 1944 and 1945. Several conferences of chaplains, some attended by American chaplains, were held in Brussels.<sup>190</sup>

The issues of how much British Jewry knew during the war of the Nazi persecution of Jews, what they did to help them and how much more they might have done has exercised and divided historians.<sup>191</sup> The Jewish chaplains knew no more than anybody else, and less if they were serving abroad until service in Italy and Europe brought some of them into contact with survivors. I have discovered no evidence of information bulletins being circulated to chaplains, perhaps because anything concerning the progress of the war would not have survived censorship. In North Africa and in Italy Jewish chaplains met Palestinian soldiers anxious for their families in lands under Nazi rule. In Italy and in Europe from 1944 Jewish chaplains encountered Jewish survivors, in Italy in large numbers and in Europe in smaller numbers and then at Bergen Belsen. In October 1944 Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz and

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<sup>189</sup> *Jewish Servicemen Spend Passover in Bombay* in *The Jewish Advocate* magazine, April 1947. My interview on 23/7/2015 with Johnny Lyndon, who remembers with affection his period in India as an Acting Jewish Chaplain.

<sup>190</sup> Illustration 14.

<sup>191</sup> Bentwich. *They Found Refuge*. Bolchover, *British Jewry and the Holocaust*. London, *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948*. Shatzkes, *Holocaust and Rescue*. Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*.

Rev. Isaac Levy separately visited the site of Breendonk concentration camp near Mechelen in Belgium. Levy visited another concentration camp near the town of Vurgt in Holland, and on another occasion took SJC Brodie and an RAF chaplain - perhaps Rev. Louis Sanker - there.<sup>192</sup> The Jewish chaplains knew as all Jewish soldiers knew and some other soldiers recognised that for the Jews of Europe a catastrophe was occurring. For the chaplains and many Jewish soldiers this was the imperative justification for the war. As mentioned<sup>193</sup> Levy explained he was motivated not by a general sense of patriotism but rather that he viewed Nazism as a threat to democracy and his own people.

On 15 April 1945 the British Army entered Bergen Belsen concentration camp. Even if British Intelligence knew of the camp, the British Army appears not to have known about it until they came upon it, and the Battle Log of 8 Corps does not contain any suggestion that this was anticipated. Rev. Leslie Hardman (18 February 1913 – 6 October 2008) arrived there on the second day of liberation and Rev. Isaac Levy, directed there because the authorities were worried about the stress on Hardman, on the eighth. Hardman spent some two months there until Levy posted him to a less stressful posting. Levy, with wider responsibilities as SJC, came and went over a period until at least August 1945. Both later recorded orally and published books on their traumatic experiences.<sup>194</sup> British Jewish chaplains Rev. Dr. Louis Sanker (b. 5 June 1909), who was an RAF chaplain, Rev. Isaac Richards (b. 23 September 1913) and Rev. Michael Elton (b. 10 September 1911) also served there for varying periods, Richards winning Levy's particular praise. At least thirty-two British Christian

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<sup>192</sup> JC 10/11/1944, p. 11. LD4, pp. 22-23, 25-26. LL 1/11/1944, 28/11/1944 (2 letters).

<sup>193</sup> In section 11.1.

<sup>194</sup> IWM 17636, 19577, 30528 (Hardman), 11572 (Levy). Hardman and Goodman, *The Survivors*. Levy, *Witness to Evil*.



chaplains served there for varying periods<sup>195</sup>, as did some Canadian chaplains and some Rabbis from different countries.

As the scale of the task facing the British Army at Bergen Belsen became clearer Chief Rabbi Hertz was authorised to send four chaplains to work there.<sup>196</sup> Three arrived in the civilian uniform of the Jewish Committee for Relief Abroad, and their utility varied. The fourth, from Jews' College, was the newly ordained Rev. Avraham Greenbaum (2 November 1922 - 16 January 2015), who served there for some eighteen months and married a survivor.<sup>197</sup>

The liberation of the concentration and extermination camps has received scholarly attention.<sup>198</sup> The ordeal which confronted the British chaplains in Bergen Belsen and their American counterparts in Dachau, Buchenwald and Mauthausen was like no other. There was an overwhelming need to try to care for thousands of sick and traumatised survivors who were still clinging to life, for which nobody within the liberating forces had any anticipation or training. In trying to do so chaplains far transcended their official role. At the outset chaplains and others tried to provide food

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<sup>195</sup> This number (of whom I had previously identified thirteen) is based upon an unpublished M.A. thesis by Robert Thompson of the University of Southampton of October 2019 entitled "*The true physicians are the padres.*" *British Christian Army Chaplains and the Liberation of Bergen Belsen*, pp.6, 25-26. It argues that Christian chaplains largely understood the Jewishness of their experience. This contrasted with most contemporary British commentators, who understood Bergen Belsen in universal rather than Jewish terms; newsreels, for example, referred to the victims as citizens of many countries rather than to the majority of them being Jews.

<sup>196</sup> LMA, ACC/2805/06/05/001.

<sup>197</sup> I interviewed Greenbaum at his home in Jerusalem on 4/1/2015, twelve days before he died.

<sup>198</sup> Lavsky, *New Beginnings*. Stone, *The Liberation of the Camps*. Stone, *Concentration Camps. A Short History*. Caplan and Wachsmann, *Concentration Camps in Nazi German*. Wachsmann, *KL – A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps*. As to Bergen Belsen: Reilly, *Belsen. The Liberation of a Concentration Camp*; Reilly, Cesarani, Kushner, Richmond (eds.), *Belsen in History and Memory*; Celinscak, *Distance from the Belsen Heap*; Shephard, *After Daybreak*.

and basic medical care before the military bureaucracies were able to start to do so. Hardman found and brought in food from the countryside and established with three others the first improvised camp hospital. From the outset Jewish chaplains pressed the military authorities, national officials and national and international Jewish organisations for further chaplains, relief teams and supplies for survivors. Some of the British chaplains used their periods of home leave to do so and to speak about the horrors which they had found in the camps. Realising the imperative need to try to reunite survivors with each other and with family and friends abroad, from the first days of liberation they collected the names of survivors and information about them, published lists of them and, sometimes in breach of regulations about the use of military post, facilitated survivors writing letters to relatives and friends around the world. They acted as intercessors and advocates for the survivors to the military authorities and assisted the survivors' organisations which emerged.

The tasks which the chaplains assumed did not sit easily with their official military duties. Chaplaincy became a form of unprecedented activism, at times bringing chaplains into conflict and even disciplinary encounters with the military authorities. One civilian chaplain (Rabbi Moshe Vilensky) was placed under house arrest and removed from Bergen Belsen,<sup>199</sup> and another (Rev. Avraham Greenbaum) court-martialled.<sup>200</sup> Faced with the desperation of survivors, chaplains sometimes acted in ways which effectively circumvented the policy of the British government of severely restricting immigration to Palestine. Confronted by the indescribable reality of the camps, some of the Jewish chaplains performed with physical resilience, moral

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<sup>199</sup> Levy, pp. 31, 81-84. Reilly, *Belsen, The Liberation of a Concentration Camp*, pp. 138-142.

<sup>200</sup> My interview with Greenbaum 4/1/2015.

courage and extraordinary achievement, sometimes at medical and disciplinary peril to themselves. Some proved unequal to the task, and some brought to it a denominational religious focus which was unrealistic, inappropriate and counter-productive.<sup>201</sup>

Bergen Belsen must have been the worst experience which British Jewish chaplains were ever called upon to endure. Lavsky wrote of the chaplains' role:

The rabbis were thus not only religious functionaries but also rescuers in the broad sense, providing crucial moral support in the early days when conditions were at their worst, but also strengthening the hand of German Jews seeking to build new communities - Greenbaum and Munk in Hamburg and Celle, Goldfinger in Brunswick, and so on.<sup>202</sup>

#### 11.22. Synagogues at RAF Stations and Army Garrisons

Between April 1944 and November 1945 synagogues were opened and consecrated by chaplains and in two cases by the Chief Rabbi at five RAF stations: Mildenhall in Suffolk,<sup>203</sup> Cranwell in Lincolnshire,<sup>204</sup> Henlow in Bedfordshire<sup>205</sup> and Sealand<sup>206</sup> and Kirkham<sup>207</sup> in Lancashire. At some of the stations there were regular services and Jewish educational courses. Two Army garrison synagogues were consecrated: in

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<sup>201</sup> I have an article in preparation which develops this material.

<sup>202</sup> Lavsky, *New Beginnings*, p. 93.

<sup>203</sup> JC 7/4/1944, p. 6; 14/4/1944, pp. 1, 11 (photo); 2/6/1944, p. 12 (photo); 21/7/1944, p. 11 (photo); 10/11/1944, p. 17; 18/5/1945, p. 12.

<sup>204</sup> JC 20/10/1944, p.1. JM, file 2011.74.

<sup>205</sup> JC 19/1/1945, p.1; 2/3/1945, pp. 1, 13; 30/3/1945, p. 13.

<sup>206</sup> JC 2/3/1945, pp. 1, 13; 4/5/1945, p.12.

<sup>207</sup> JC 7/12/1945, p. 12.

October 1944 at Colchester in Essex<sup>208</sup> and in August 1945, built by German prisoners of war, at Catterick<sup>209</sup> in Yorkshire.

### 11.23. The War Ends

On Sunday 13 May 1945 services of thanksgiving were held in synagogues throughout the country. At St. John's Wood Synagogue in London a service was held for all Jewish personnel of the Allied Armed Forces, at which London based chaplains officiated.<sup>210</sup> On Sunday 11 November 1945 SJC Brodie represented the Chief Rabbi at a Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph in London. On the following day he represented him at a conference with the authorities to discuss a suitable date on which to commemorate in future years the dead of both world wars.<sup>211</sup>

### 11.24. Conclusion

By 1939 the operation of chaplaincy, including Jewish chaplaincy, was well established. Essentially the Second World War consolidated that experience. There was a working ratio of chaplains to soldiers of 1:1,100, which in 1942 became 1:1,250.<sup>212</sup> A paper written by SJC Brodie in May 1946 stated that the establishment of Jewish chaplains was based on one chaplain to 1,250 men.<sup>213</sup> These ratios postulated the collocation of soldiers, and so bore inappropriately on dispersed Jewish soldiers. Without the records of the JWSC it is more difficult to know where the initiatives lay for the recruitment of chaplains, and to what extent the ratios of chaplains to soldiers were applied. The relationship between the authorities and the

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<sup>208</sup> JC 3/11/1944, p. 5.

<sup>209</sup> JC 10/8/1945, p. 18. JM, file 2011.74.

<sup>210</sup> JC 11/5/1945, pp. 1, 8; 18/5/1945, p.1.

<sup>211</sup> JC 16/11/1945, p. 18.

<sup>212</sup> Snape, *Clergy under Fire*, p. 286.

<sup>213</sup> JM, file 2011.74.

Jewish community seems to have developed pragmatically. During 1940 the authorities agreed to Gollop's requests to appoint two chaplains to the B.E.F. and in December to appoint another and also authorised a substantial increase in the number of Jewish chaplains, for which there was difficulty in finding appointees. These appointments cannot have been on a capitation basis. Yet Rev. Leslie Hardman wanted to enlist early in 1940 but it was considered that there were too few Jewish soldiers and he was not accepted until early in 1942. Amongst the thirty thousand Jews living in Palestine who were recruited by Britain, twelve served as chaplains. In December 1943 the authorities left the appointment of a new SJC in principle to the community, although they were prepared to intervene to prevent the appointment of a chaplain, however experienced and well connected, whose record in their view rendered him unsuitable. In 1944 the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean sought a Jewish chaplain, but without success. Already a chaplain in the Home Command, Rev. Leslie Edgar had to await a vacancy abroad for almost a year from March 1944 and through the invasion of Europe until February 1945. In April 1945 the authorities, faced with the nightmare of coping at Bergen Belsen, requested four civilian ministers. Some ministers, including Hardman, faced resistance from their communities to enlisting, which with an eye to their post-war careers must have been a concern.

With the inevitable scarcity of Jewish chaplains and the global dispersion of British forces unofficial Jewish chaplaincy was widespread in the Second World War, with numerous recorded instances and doubtless innumerable unrecorded. An Army Council Instruction of 1942 and an Air Ministry Order of 1943 authorised the appointment of lay leaders and preachers from among members of H.M. Forces to assist chaplains and officiating chaplains. In January 1945 Senior Jewish Chaplain

M. Berman appointed a naval officer as Acting Jewish Chaplain and welfare officer for the Algiers District. Within Burma Command the chaplaincy authorities appointed a Jewish chaplaincy assistant from 1945 until 1947. In 1945 at the 112 British General Hospital in Avadi in India there was a non-commissioned officer who was officially in charge of Jewish welfare in the area and who took responsibility for the funeral of a Jewish soldier. Within India Command Rev. Greenberg on his own initiative appointed two Acting Jewish Chaplains from 1946 to 1947.

## 12. NATIONAL SERVICE AND VOLUNTARY SERVICE

### 12.1. Chaplaincy

Amongst the generation of military age who had served together, residual distinctions between the established and immigrant communities were erased by the war. The European refugees of the 1930s, especially those who had served in the armed forces, many with names which they had been counselled to anglicise, became absorbed into the patterns of British life. Many had been from the middle classes in Europe, and their absorption was therefore perhaps less challenging than had been that of the refugee generation from Eastern Europe, the more so as their Jewish affiliation was often less. They had largely been able to settle in middle class suburbs of north west London and of provincial communities. Thus by 1945 the established community and the two immigrant communities from Eastern and Western Europe had largely coalesced as a single, if far from unitary, British Jewry. In the years after the war the children of the immigrants from Eastern Europe left the “east end” of their childhood for the leafier suburbs, with only small numbers of the original immigrant generation remaining there.

Very few Jews who had served had been regular soldiers. Most regarded themselves, like most other soldiers, as civilians enlisted for the duration of the war and wished to return to civilian life as soon as they could. Many challenges lay ahead. For Jews and non-Jews alike they included bereaved families, people with life-changing physical and mental injury, coping with austerity and rationing, family tensions born of prolonged separation and adaptation to normal life, settling down, marrying and starting families and securing a livelihood. Jews had also to contend with the lost Jewish education of children, the lapsed religious observance of

wartime, relatives missing in Europe and impossible to attempt to trace in the Soviet Union and the lands which lay under its domination and emerging reports of what was to become known to the world as the Holocaust and in Jewish thought as the *Shoah*. Street fascism re-emerged after the war and was confronted by groups of Jewish ex-servicemen.<sup>1</sup> Antisemitism increased as British troops were caught up in the turbulent events in Palestine which reached their climax with the British withdrawal and the creation of the State of Israel in May 1948.

Chaplains wished to revert from military to civilian ministry, regarding both as the same calling. Their principal concern was to secure ministerial positions and to reconstruct their communities from the wartime disruption of Jewish life. In 1922 Michael Adler had reflected upon his chaplaincy achievement in terms of practical utility and the good standing of the Jewish community.<sup>2</sup> I have not encountered any comparable process of reflection after the end of the Second World War. Judaism is a practical religion and way of life, and like all Jews the chaplains had sufficient to pre-occupy them without philosophical reflection upon a painful past. For students of Jewish teaching, which chaplains were, a proper response to awesome tragedy is silence.<sup>3</sup> In their innermost thoughts the chaplains are likely to have reflected upon the practical utility of their service and their own small role in the painful salvation of a remnant of the Jewish People.

Wartime conscription gave way to National Service, which from 1949 required men aged between seventeen and twenty-one, with some exempt categories, to serve in the armed forces for eighteen months, extended in 1950 because of the Korean War

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<sup>1</sup> Beckman, *The 43 Group*. Sonabend, *We Fight Fascists: The 43 Group and their Forgotten Battle for Post-War Britain*.

<sup>2</sup> Section 9.14.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Vayikra/Leviticus 10, 3 and Psalm 39, 10.



to two years. Large numbers of troops served in the British Army of the Rhine in Germany, in the Korean War in the early 1950s and in various garrisons around the world. When National Service ended on 31 December 1960 enlistment in the regular and territorial forces became and has remained voluntary.<sup>4</sup>

Early in 1947 the United Synagogue established the Jewish Committee for H.M. Forces (JCHMF) to deal with all matters relating to Jewish personnel in or leaving H.M. Forces. Unlike the JWSC, it was intended to be representative of every section of the community. Thenceforth military chaplaincy ceased to be within the purview of the Visitation Committee.<sup>5</sup> The JCHMF, under the aegis of the Chief Rabbi, became and remains the “endorsing authority” approving candidates for Jewish chaplaincy appointments.<sup>6</sup>

In 1948 Rabbi Israel Brodie became Chief Rabbi. He was succeeded as Senior Jewish Chaplain by Rev. Isaac Levy, with the status of Chaplain Second Class, with the equivalent rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, his appointment being recognised by the Royal Navy and the RAF. He served as the Jewish representative on the Interdenominational Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Defence.<sup>7</sup> There were several National Service Jewish chaplains for varying periods, some on short service commissions in the Regular Army, serving in Britain, Germany, the Middle East and elsewhere. The wartime system of appointed lay leaders and lay preachers continued at numerous Army bases and RAF stations in Britain, some with rooms

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<sup>4</sup> *Menorah*, the magazine for Jewish members of the armed forces, is a source of material throughout this section.

<sup>5</sup> VC/5/199, 208, 212. VC/6/167. ACC/3400/02/05/041. Homa, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, pp.196 - 214.

<sup>6</sup> LMA, ACC/2999/E/01/004, 005. University of Southampton, Special Collection MS169/A12, A62, minutes of JCHMF 15/3/1966 and 7/3/1973.

<sup>7</sup> University of Southampton, Special Collection MS169/A12.

equipped as a synagogue and regular services, and elsewhere around the world. There continued to be officiating clergymen (who continued sometimes to be referred to as officiating chaplains), mainly communal ministers, through the 1950s; in Western Command alone, covering the north west of England and north Wales, there were fifteen in 1951, some of them former chaplains.<sup>8</sup> In Germany Harry Sherman (d. 1990) of the Intelligence Office served from the 1950s until 1981 as the lay chaplain and leader of the British Jewish military community. Throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s *Menorah* magazine carried regular reports about Jewish activities at numerous Army and RAF districts and bases around Britain and abroad led by a combination of officiating clergymen, visiting ministers and serving personnel acting as lay readers. From 1968 until 1970 there were two Auxiliary Chaplains to United States forces, one to the air base in Prestwick and naval base on the Clyde and the other to USAF personnel stationed at Ruislip near London.<sup>9</sup>

In 1952 and 1953 synagogues were consecrated at a number of RAF stations. To ease their integration all RAF National Service conscripts who were Jewish were posted in the 1950s initially to RAF Hednesford in Staffordshire and then when it closed in 1957 to RAF Bridgnorth near Birmingham. At times there could be eighty or ninety Jews, and a synagogue and club room were opened at RAF Bridgnorth in 1957. Rev. Reuben Brookes served both stations as an officiating chaplain. National Service Flying Officer Gerald Rapport was appointed in April 1960 the station education officer at RAF Bridgnorth because it had a synagogue and he was religiously observant. He was appointed to be the officer in charge of Jewish

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<sup>8</sup> JM, file 2014.77.

<sup>9</sup> *Menorah* magazine generally and various interviews listed in section 15.

personnel and was regarded as an acting chaplain, in which capacity he shared a hut with the Protestant and Roman Catholic padres.<sup>10</sup>

In November 1966 Levy was succeeded as SJC by Rabbi Cyril S. Z. K. Harris (19 September 1936 – 13 September 2005). He was succeeded in January 1972 by Rev. Malcolm Weisman OBE (b. December 1930), a part time RAF chaplain who was then also commissioned into the Territorial Army Volunteer Reserve. As successive Senior Jewish Chaplains, Harris and subsequently Weisman were listed in the Navy List as Officiating Chaplains for the Royal Navy.<sup>11</sup> Weisman attended conferences of the North American and European Chiefs of Chaplains and of the Allied Air Forces Chiefs of Chaplains Consultative Committee, later serving for eleven years as its Secretary General and then as its honorary life President.<sup>12</sup> He served as a Member of the Advisory Panel on the Chaplaincy Services<sup>13</sup> and as a member of the Consultative Committee of Senior Allied Air Force Chaplains<sup>14</sup> and participated at conferences of the Jewish Welfare Board Jewish Chaplains Council in the United States<sup>15</sup>. Under the Blair government there was an initiative to appoint civilian religious advisers to the military for minority faith groups, but this seems not to have extended to the Jewish community, doubtless because there was already an established Jewish chaplaincy structure. Rabbi Reuben Livingstone (b. July 1959) has been since 2012 the current Senior Jewish Chaplain to H.M. Forces and is a full-

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<sup>10</sup> Letters from Gerald Rapport 23/10/2014 and 31/7/2015.

<sup>11</sup> LMA, ACC/2999/E/01/004, ACC/2999/E/06/005.

<sup>12</sup> LMA, ACC/2999/E/01/005.

<sup>13</sup> LMA, ACC/2999/E/06/001.

<sup>14</sup> LMA, ACC/2999/E/06/005.

<sup>15</sup> LMA, ACC/2999/F/05/002. *Menorah* magazine, issue 30/3, Autumn 1987, p.15. RAF Museum, chaplaincy box 25. My interviews with Rev. Malcolm Weisman 8/5/2014 and 6/6/2019.

time Army Reservist.<sup>16</sup> There are currently two part-time Army Cadet Force chaplains, Rabbis Ariel Abel and Simon Taylor.<sup>17</sup>

## 12.2. Campaigns

No British Jewish chaplain served in Korea. In his message for the Jewish New Year for 1951, SJC Levy expressed the hope that Jewish soldiers would be able to attend services with the Americans, who had a number of Jewish chaplains there. Captain Henry Engelsman, RADC (4 October 1929 – 31 May 2009) conducted religious services in Korea.<sup>18</sup> Craftsman Louis Rapaport, REME (b. December 1932) served in Korea with the Durham Light Infantry. In March 1953 an invitation arrived for Jewish soldiers to attend the Passover Seder service with the American I Corps. The Chaplain arranged for Rapaport to attend. He “was kitted in clean clothing specially swapped for the occasion from several chaps in the tent” and was one of ten British soldiers who participated.<sup>19</sup>

No British Jewish chaplain served in theatre during the operations in Northern Ireland, the Falklands, the Gulf or Afghanistan. A substantial quantity of kosher ration packs was despatched for a small number of Jewish soldiers serving in Afghanistan.

## 12.3. Moral Leadership Courses

From towards the end of the Second World War until the present day the Jewish chaplaincy has conducted courses of religious and moral instruction and social activity for Jewish personnel. Moral leadership courses, as they ultimately became

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<sup>16</sup> My interviews with Rabbi Reuben Livingstone 16/1/2015, 5/4/2017, 13/8/2017 and 24/5/2020.

<sup>17</sup> My interviews with Rabbi Ariel Abel 21/8/2018 and 13/1/2019.

<sup>18</sup> My interview with Mrs Shirley Engelsman (widow) 7/3/2017.

<sup>19</sup> My interview with Louis Rapaport 9/4/2017. American Seder booklet and papers and Rapaport’s letters to his family.

known, originated in the RAF in 1941 and were held under the auspices of religious denominations. The first Jewish course, for Jews in the RAF and the Air Forces of other Allied Nations, was held in August 1944, at Kfar Hanoar Hadati in Palestine and lasted for a week.<sup>20</sup> Over time they were extended to all serving Jewish personnel and held in Britain and in numerous locations around the world, some lasting over the periods of festivals. Conducted by chaplains, they catered for the needs of the large numbers of young Jewish National Servicemen, many away from home for the first time. With the ending of National Service they were not held between 1964 and 1968.<sup>21</sup> They were revived in 1969, becoming courses of two or three days, generally over a Shabbat and weekend. Since the ending of National Service the numbers of serving Jewish personnel have been estimated to be in the low hundreds.<sup>22</sup> Many service bases have always been far distant from Jewish communities, and for many Jewish personnel the chaplain and the occasional course are their only link with Judaism and the British Jewish community.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> JC 18/8/1944, p.6. *Wherein I Glory*. RAF Museum, draft history of RAF Chaplaincy in chaplaincy boxes 8, 64.

<sup>21</sup> LMA, ACC/2999/E/01/004. University of Southampton, Special Collection MS 169.

<sup>22</sup> There are currently some 130 personnel who have declared themselves to be Jewish. Rabbi Livingstone has engaged with some 300 Jewish personnel, of whom about 150 constitute a core, and believes that they number probably a few hundred. Not all of them are Jewish in terms of Jewish Law, as the armed forces accept at face value the wish of any serviceman to be considered Jewish. Interviews with Rabbi Livingstone in section 12.1., note 16.

<sup>23</sup> *Menorah* magazine generally. LMA, ACC/2805/07/01/037; ACC/2999/E/01/003, 004; ACC/2999/E/05/001-025.

### 13. CONCLUSION

The period from 1892 until 1939 was that of the innovation of British Jewish military chaplaincy: in origin, in wartime and then in peacetime. That from 1939 until the present day may be viewed as that of its consolidation: in wartime and then in peacetime, the latter punctuated by some specific military operations and conflicts.

The development from the eighteenth century of a Jewish role within the British military was incremental, each progression being earned through contribution and sacrifice. The creation and development of British Jewish chaplaincy was built upon it and was similarly incremental. Initially few in number, Jews were essentially accepted into the British military on equal terms, as were Jewish chaplains. The history of Jewish chaplaincy accords with Penslar's thesis that chaplains were the bellwether or, to use another metaphor, the litmus test of Jewish acceptance within the military as a whole. It accords too with the theses of Endelman and Feldman of the gradualism of the history of British Jewry, the integration of British Jewry into the wider society and the lack of surface drama.

Whilst not entirely unilateral, the initiative for Jewish chaplaincy derived for the most part from the British Jewish community and from individuals within it. The role of the authorities was generally reactive and supportive, although at points restrictive, through criteria which bore inappropriately upon Jews of ratios of chaplains to troops and of chaplaincy vacancies. Despite some tensions inevitable in all human affairs, the authorities always knew that they were engaging with a patriotic, responsible and supportive Jewish communal leadership.

Within Jewish chaplaincy there was an almost total absence of denominational religious tension. Inevitably there were never remotely enough Jewish chaplains. Jewish servicemen had in wartime largely to fend for themselves as Jews, spiritually, socially and in terms of mutual support. I have found much evidence of this, some of which I have cited and much of which space has constrained me to omit. From the totality of that evidence I think it fair to conclude that in wartime the “unofficial” variant of chaplaincy ranked significantly alongside the “official” form.

In the Second World War an Australian Presbyterian Army Chaplain came eventually to be treated with a certain deference by his Japanese captors, and was made to wear an armband inscribed with green Japanese characters. He survived, and when he returned home the inscription was translated for him as “Captain of the Souls of Men”.<sup>1</sup> Within Jewish chaplaincy perhaps Rev. Leslie Edgar best illustrated this role:

Many times since the war, Jewish men and women have come up to me with their faces lit up with pleasure as they recognised their former Chaplain. Indeed, sometimes the encounters take on a comic aspect. One day, after lunching with a friend at the Great Russell Hotel, I was standing on the hotel steps chatting to him before saying farewell. A taxi drew up, and to my surprise, the driver got down from his seat taking no notice of the four people in the taxi. He rushed up the steps of the hotel, almost embraced me, and when it was obvious I didn't recognise him, said, his face registering great disappointment: ‘But you were my Chaplain in the army!’ The sense of friendly

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<sup>1</sup> Gladwin, *Captains of the Soul*.

relationship was so great that the fact that he was only one of thousands of men to whom I was Chaplain did not occur to him at all. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Edgar, *Some Memories of My Ministry*, p. 30.



## 14. ILLUSTRATIONS



Illustration 1. The Jewish chaplaincy cap badge. It seems to have changed slightly over time; this version was adopted in 1940. (Sections 6.4., 9.4., 11.2.)



Illustration 2. The gravestone of Second Lieutenant Marcus Segal. (Section 9.11.)

### Services for Jewish Soldiers.

In addition to the services recorded in our last issue under the heading of "Forthcoming Services," parades of Jewish soldiers for Divine Services were held during the past week and were conducted by the gentlemen named as follows:—

Hightown, Rev. S. Frampton; Curragh Camp, Rev. A. Gudansky; Tipperary, Corpl. S. Spero; Ballyvonare, Pte. H. Garner.

#### FORTHCOMING SERVICES.

Services have been arranged and will be conducted by the gentlemen named as follows:—

Saturday, 28th: Reading Synagogue, 9, Rev. L. Wolfe; Cathcart Street Synagogue, Greenock, 10, Rev. B. Morris; Garnethill Synagogue, Glasgow, 10, Rev. I. Levine; York, 9.30, Rev. M. Abrahams; Bridlington, 10.30, Lance-Corpl. Jacobs; The Synagogue, Heneage Road, Grimsby, 9.30, Rev. I. Solomon Fox; The Pavilion, Lumley Road, Skegness, 9.30, Cyclist L. Harris; The Synagogue, North Church Street, Sheffield, 9.45, Rabbi B. I. Cohen; Sutton Veny, Warminster, 2.30, Sergt. I. D. Goldberg; Norwich Synagogue, 10, Rev. N. Isaacs; The Synagogue, Catherine Street, Plymouth, 3, Rev. L. A. Falk; Adelaide Road Synagogue, Dublin, 9.30, Rev. A. Gudansky; Sunday, 29th: The Synagogue, Barras Lane, Coventry, 3, Rev. I. Candleshine; Randalstown, 11.30, Pte. J. L. Fisher; Tipperary, 11, Corpl. S. Spero; Ballyvonare, 11, Pte. H. Garner; Albany House, Worcester, 11, Pte. Solomon; Command Depot, Sutton Coldfield, 11, Pte. Berlyne; Mess Tent, Thoresby Camp, near Worksop, 11.15, Lance-Corpl. J. Werner; No. 3 Lecture Hall, Harrowby Camp, Grantham, 10.30, Sergt. D. Goldberg; Kimmel Park, 10.30, Rev. S. Frampton; Bulford, Salisbury Plain, 3, Rev. Dr. J. Abelson and Lieut. J. Ellenbogen; Larkhill, Salisbury Plain, 10.30, Mr. H. Boas; Thetford Hutments Camp, 10, Corpl. Smith; Woodbridge Parade Grounds, 10, Pte. Cott; Chelmsford, 10, Corpl. Bass; Walton Ashes, 10, Corpl. Goodman; Jewish Hut, No. 16 Lines, Clipstone Camp, Notts, 11.30, Rabbi B. I. Cohen; Cathedral Road Synagogue, Cardiff, 11.30, Rev. H. Jerevitch; Colchester, Hyderabad Barracks, 9, Rev. W. Levin; Woodham Mortimer, 10, Lieut. Phillips; Reading Synagogue, 9.30, Rev. L. Wolfe; Whittington Camp, 10, Corpl. Rosenthal; Prees Heath Camp, 11, Pte. S. Rosenthal; Heulla Park Camp, 10, 2nd-Lieut. M. Firth; Court Martial Room, No. 9 Lines, Rugeley, 11.15, Pte. R. Rosenbloom; Court Martial Hut, Wimbledon Camp, 9.30, Rev. N. Goldston; Essex (D) Recreation Hut, Welbeck Camp, Worksop, 11, Ptes. J. Saltiel and I. Ansell; Graham Street Synagogue, Edinburgh, 11, Rev. J. Fürst.

On Sunday last, the Rev. Lionel Geffen conducted, at the Coventry Synagogue, the first of a series of services for Jewish soldiers stationed in that and in neighbouring towns. After the service, the soldiers (including some who were in hospital) were entertained to tea by Mr. and Mrs. Glieberman.

A considerable amount of interest has recently been evinced in the welfare of the Jewish convalescent soldiers at Brighton, of whom there are now a considerable number in the town, by M. Joseph Landau, President of the Russo-Polish Orthodox Synagogue in Paris. Having obtained the Commanding Officer's permission for their attendance at the Sabbath morning service at the Brighton Synagogue, they were afterwards generously entertained at the Hotel Metropole, M. Landau's present residence, and also to tea on the following day. The needs of the guests, who were also the recipients of monetary gifts and cigarettes from M. Landau, were well looked after by Madame Landau, her niece and several lady friends. The orchestra played suitable selections. Much interest was shown in the proceedings by the visitors at the hotel.

Illustration 3. *Jewish Chronicle* 27 July 1917, p. 14. Similar lists appeared regularly in the *Jewish Chronicle* and sometimes in the *Jewish World* throughout the First World War. (Section 9.18.)



Illustration 4. The gravestone in the British Hyde Park Corner Cemetery of German Lieutenant Max Seller. (Section 9.20.)

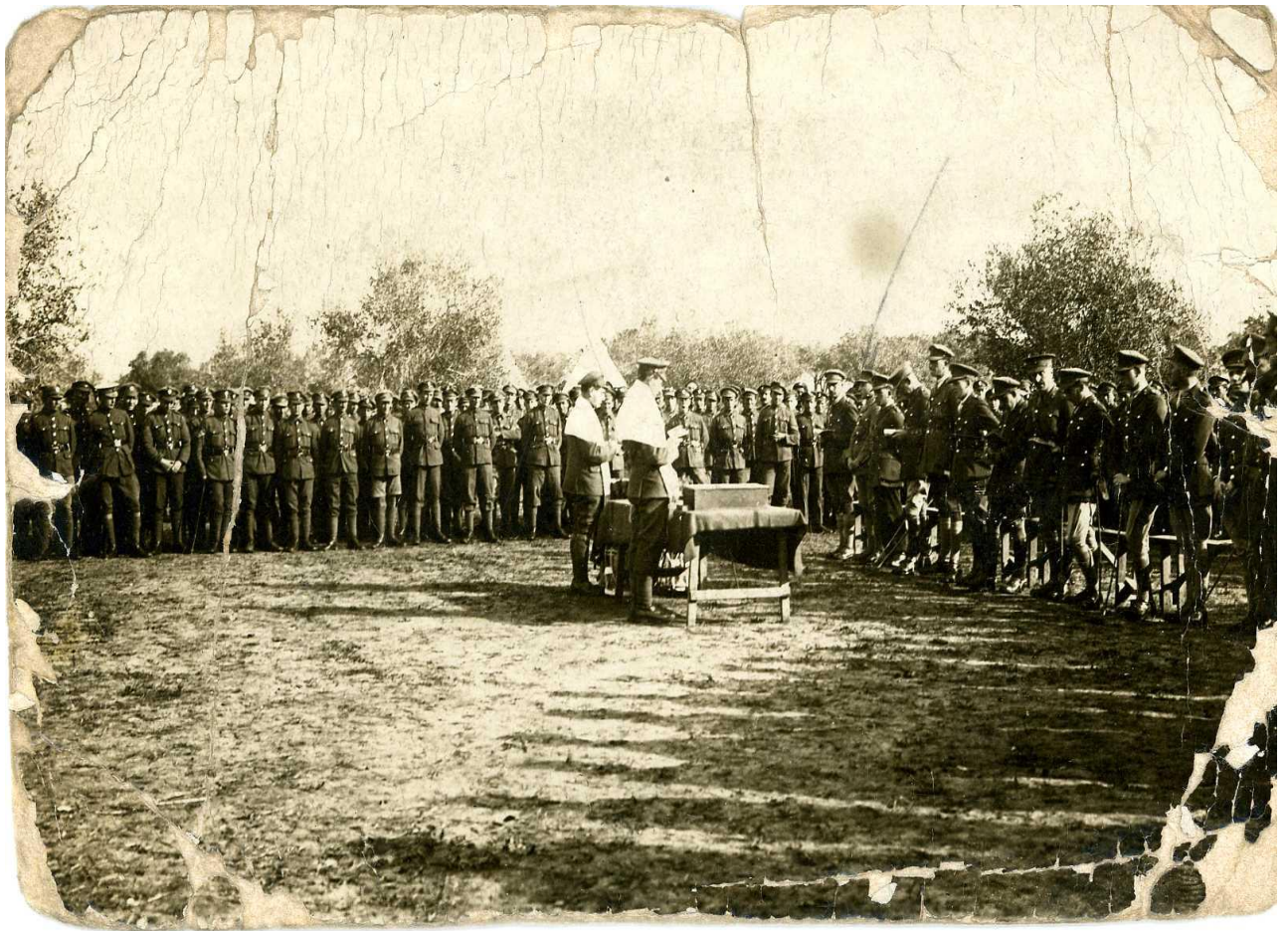


Illustration 5. Rev. Leib Isaac Falk conducting a service for the Jewish Legion in Egypt or Palestine between 1918 and 1921. (Section 9.29)



Illustration 6. Officiating Chaplain Rev. Emanuel Goodman of Plymouth ministering to British men and women of the three services and to American soldiers ahead of D-Day. (Section 11.3.)



Illustration 7. Armlet issued to Jewish Air Raid Precautions Wardens. This was that of Rev.Eli Kahan of Harrogate. (Section 11.3.)

LEWIS, Harold

1376177

23rd Aug 1943

Cpl ~~42~~

R.A.F.

~~London Hqs, N.W.1. Bicester~~ Hanwell

Wife: 13 Northfield Rd, N.16  
~~144 Birmingham Road, Bicester, Oxon.~~

Sent as CAPC: 4/11/40: seen by Rev. Chait 12/1/42, given ~~400~~.  
2/3/42: 30/3/42: 3/5/42 given ~~Hit of the Jews~~: 1/4/42: 8/9/42: 30/11/42  
given Bible & History: 25/5/43: 2/7/43: 23/9/43: 15/12/43.

seen by Rev. Chait 11/1/44, given Roth: 3 v. Joseph 26/9/45.

Illustration 8. The Chaplaincy Card of Corporal Harold Lewis, RAF (my father) recording chaplaincy visits by Revs Chait and Joseph at RAF Bicester and RAF Hanwell and books (*History of the Jews, Bible and History, Roth*) given to him. (Section 11.6.)





Illustration 9. Jewish Chaplains in the Second World War. Rev. Solomon (“Solly”) Hooker (extreme right) identified in his copy of the photograph each of the chaplains. Seated third from the left is SJC Gollop. On his right is Rev. Arthur Barnett, who had succeeded Rev. Michael Adler as SJC on the western front in the First World War. On his left is a chaplain from another Allied country. Taken on what seems like a rooftop, the photograph may have been taken at the chaplaincy conference held in Britain in April 1941. If not, it was taken not later than the summer of 1943, when some of those present began to go abroad. (Section 11.7.)



Illustration 10. The Jewish Infantry Brigade Group served in 1944-1945 in Italy and Europe. Before transferring into it, many of its soldiers had fought, some since 1941, in British, Palestinian and other units in North Africa and the Middle East. This photograph was taken in Italy in March 1945 during the visit of SJC Rabbi Israel Brodie, who is in the back row wearing a cap. At the extreme right wearing a cap is one of the Brigade chaplains, Rev. Bernard Casper, who served from 1941 in Britain, Italy and Europe. (Section 11.19.)



Illustration 11. As well as soldiering, the Jewish Infantry Brigade Group cared for thousands of Jewish refugees whom it encountered in Italy who had survived there or who had managed to reach its safety after Italy joined the Allies. Conducting a Seder service for Allied troops and refugees is Rev. Solly Hooker. He served from 1942 in Britain, North Africa, the Middle East, Italy and, after a home leave of a few weeks, India. (Section 11.19.)

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REVEREND GREENBERG JEWISH CHAPLAIN HQ 108

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126 INDIAN BASE GENERAL HOSPITAL BRITISH TROOPS  
TRIMULGHERRY INDIA STOP PLEASE VISIT IMMEDIATELY  
AND SIGNAL REPORT = BRODIE \*

INWARD  
GCT  
NDR

INITIALS

TIME  
RBCD

18.56

81

2011.84

Illustration 12. On 9 February 1946 SJC Brodie in London sent this signal to Jewish Chaplain Rev. Barry Greenberg, who served from 1945 until 1947 in the Mediterranean, India and Britain. Rev. Solly Hooker was on the DI (dangerously ill) list with a cerebral tumour. In the British military hospital at Secunderabad a British army neuro-surgeon performed a decompression operation with a view to enabling Hooker to be transferred back to Britain. However Hooker died on 12 February 1946. (Section 11.20.)

TO

AS/412



הזיכרת הבית  
חקם נא לזכרת דוד הכפלה

INVITATION  
DEDICATION SERVICE  
OF THE  
SYNAGOGUE  
**OHEL JACOB**

ON  
SATURDAY EVENING

7<sup>th</sup> ELLUL

5704



בית  
א.ה.ל.  
י.ע.ב.

בית  
SYNAGOGUE  
**OHEL JACOB**

POW CAMP  
CHANGI GAOL



1944

5704

MALAYA

Illustration 13. Following a discussion between Dutch Rabbi Chaim Nussbaum and the ACG, Lt. Col. Lewis Bryan, a decision was taken to build a synagogue in the P.O.W. camp in Changi Gaol. Scottish soldiers of the Royal Engineers built a small building with space for about fifty people and some Jewish artists contributed to its interior, including a representation of the two Tablets with the Ten Commandments and a suitably decorated curtain in front of an imaginary ark. On Saturday evening 26 August 1944 (the Hebrew date being 7 Ellul 5704) an official dedication service of the *Ohel Yaakov* (Tent of Jacob) Synagogue was held. Individual invitations to the service were hand drawn and coloured. Jews from Britain, America, Holland, India and Australia attended, together with the ACG and many other camp leaders. Rabbi Nussbaum conducted the service, and gave a discourse on the ego and the psyche, and Joe Bernstein, a “soft souled young man from Glasgow”, sang beautifully. The synagogue became the “one place like home” of most Jews, of quiet and rest, with regular services on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. This original hand drawn and coloured invitation to the dedication was within the papers of Lance-Corporal Cyril Wernick who survived the war but died after liberation of malnutrition.<sup>1</sup> (Section 11.20.)

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<sup>1</sup> MS 116/2, Papers of Cyril Wernick, University of Southampton, Hartley Library, Special Collections.



Illustration 14. Rev. Philip Cohen served as a Jewish Chaplain from 1940 in Britain and in north west Europe. On 17 November 1944 in the newly restored synagogue in Tilburg he conducted the first Jewish wedding to take place in the liberated south of Holland. The couple were Max Hené, 36, and Hilde Mayer, 27, who had fled Germany to Holland and been hidden on one floor of a house in Tilburg together with seven other family members since 27 August 1942. (Section 11.21.)

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Box 8. Moral leadership courses.  
Box 13. RAF Chaplains' Branch Annual Review 2005-2006.  
Box 25. Guide to Church of England Chaplains in the Royal Air Force, 1987. Royal Air Force Chaplains Handbook, 2001.  
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Box 63. *Menorah* magazine.  
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## 16. GLOSSARY

The Calendar. There is a Hebrew calendar, which causes Festivals to fall generally but not invariably in particular months of the secular calendar.

Pronunciation. "Ch" in Chanukah, Chazan, Semichah, etc., is pronounced "ha", and in Pesach, Mi-Sheberach, etc., as "ah". It is not pronounced as in "chair" or "choir". Schochet is pronounced "shohet". It would be phonetically clearer to transliterate as Hanuka, Hazan, Semiha, Paysah, Mi-Sheberah and Shohet, but this would seem strange to many Jewish readers.

Afikomon. Lit the dessert course of a meal. In the Seder service, a piece of matza hidden early in the service and traditionally searched for later by the children.

Agudah. An Orthodox religious movement.

Al Khet. The confessional prayer recited during the Kol Nidrei service.

Arba Kanfoth. Lit four corners. Also known as Tzitzit. An undergarment with fringes at the four corners worn by observant Jewish men.

Aron Kodesh. The Holy Ark in a synagogue, housing the Sifrei Torah.

Askkenazi (pl. Ashkenazim). Jews with a heritage in Germany and Eastern Europe.

Avot. Lit. Fathers. The fathers of the Jewish people: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Baal Tokeah. The person who sounds the Shofar on the Yomim Noraim.

Bar Mitzvah. Lit. son of a commandment. Ceremony marking a boy's assumption of religious responsibility on attaining his thirteenth birthday. Girls have a similar Bat Mitzvah, lit. daughter of a commandment, ceremony, on their twelfth birthday in the Orthodox and some other traditions and on their thirteenth in other traditions.

Beth Din. Lit. house of judgement. Religious Court.

Beth Hamidrash. Study house/room.

B'nai Brith. Lit. Children of the Covenant. An activist, welfare and social organisation with national and local branches.

Brit Milah. Male circumcision, ideally carried out on the eighth day of a baby's life.

B.C.E. Before the Common Era. Used by Jews rather than B.C.

C.E. The Common Era. Used by Jews rather than A.D.

Chametz. Foodstuffs, such as bread, which contain yeast and are thus forbidden on Pesach.

Chanukah/Hanukah. Festival of eight days, normally falling in December. Commemorates amongst other things the military victory of the Hasmonean Jews

led by Judah the Maccabee, who became known as the Maccabees, over the rule of the Seleucid Greeks in the Land of Israel in 164 BCE and the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem. Marked by lighting one candle on the first evening, two on the second, etc. With its military dimension, it has always had a strong resonance with Jewish soldiers on active service.

Chassid (pl. Chassidim, adj. Chassidic). Lit. kindness. One grouping of Ultra-Orthodox Jews.

Chazan/Cantor. Leader of communal prayers, which are sung.

Chazanut. The melodies of synagogue services.

Chevra Kadisha. Burial Society, established by a Jewish community to arrange funerals.

Chochma. Wisdom. Pl. Chochmas, pieces of practical wisdom.

Cohen (pl. Cohanim). Lit. priest. Member of the priestly tribe within the Jewish People.

Daven. To pray, and (in context) to lead public prayers.

Dayan. Judge of a Beth Din.

El Mole Rachamim. Memorial Prayer.

Eretz Yisrael. The Land of Israel.

Etz Chaim. Tree of Life. Amongst other things, a metaphor for the Torah and the name of a Yeshiva.

Fast of Gedaliah. A fast day falling immediately after the two days of Rosh Hashanah.

Hachsharah. Training for agricultural work in Israel.

Haftorah. Lesson from the Prophets, having a connection with the weekly Sedra and read in the synagogue after it.

Haggadah (pl. Haggadot). Lit. The Story. Book containing the order of service for Seder night.

Haham. The spiritual leader of the Sephardi Jewish community.

Halacha (adj. Halachic). Jewish Law.

Hanukah. See Chanukah/Hanukah.

Hatikvah. Lit. The Hope. Anthem of Jewish national identity, and from 1948 the national anthem of the State of Israel.

Hora. Popular dance in Palestine and then in Israel, in which the dancers form circles.



Joint Distribution Committee (JDC or "The Joint"). United States Jewish welfare organisation.

Kaddish. A prayer recited in memory of the dead, including on the anniversary of the death of a relative.

Kashrut. Jewish Law requires Jews to confine their diet to food which is permitted or Kosher. The system regulating the identification and preparation of Kosher food is known by the abstract noun Kashrut.

Ketubah (pl. Ketubot). Declaration and certificate of marriage.

Kol Nidrei. Lit. all vows. Service on the evening of Yom Kippur, beginning with a haunting melody of that name.

Lag B'Omer. A joyous day on the thirty third day of the period of subdued mood of fifty days known as the Omer between Pesach and Shavuot.

Luach. Jewish calendar, containing the dates of Sabbaths and Festivals. Essential for those without access to organised Jewish life, for example PoWs, who needed to know them.

Ma'ariv. The daily evening service.

Maccabi. A Jewish sporting organisation.

Machzike Hadath. An Orthodox religious movement.

Machzor (pl. Machzorim). Prayer book for Festivals.

Magen David. Shield of David. Emblem of the Jewish People, comprising a six pointed star design formed of two interlocking triangles. Incorporated into the cap badge for Jewish chaplains of the RACHD.

Matza (pl. Matzot (Hebrew) or Matzas/Matzos (colloquial)). Unleavened bread, eaten by Jews in place of leavened bread throughout the festival of Pesach to relive the experience of the Israelites leaving Egypt in haste without having time to wait for the dough of their bread to rise.

Megillah (pl. Megillot). Certain of the books of the Bible (Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther), each of which is read on a particular Festival.

Menorah. Traditional Jewish candelabrum.

Mezuzah (pl. Mezuzot). Small box affixed to the doorposts within a Jewish house containing extracts from Scripture written on parchment.

Mikvah. Bath for ritual immersion, including of a woman before marriage.

Mincha. The daily afternoon service.

Minhag. Custom.

Minhag Anglia. Religious traditions and customs which have developed in Britain.

Minyan. Minimum of ten adult Jewish males forming a necessary quorum for public prayer.

Mi-Sheberach. Lit. may He bless. A blessing for the welfare of a person.

Mitnagged (pl. Mitnagdim). One grouping of Jews in Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century.

Mizrachi. Religious Zionist.

Mo-at Tsur. Traditional popular hymn sung at Chanukah.

Mohel. One who performs Brit Milah on a Jewish male baby.

Musaf. The Additional Service, recited on Sabbaths and Festivals.

Ne'ilah. Concluding Service on Yom Kippur.

Neurasthenia. A nervous disability. In the First World War this term was applied to officers, sometimes as a euphemism for mental breakdown, whilst the term "shell shock" was applied to other ranks.

Parsha (also Sedra). The weekly portion of the Torah read in the synagogue.

Pesach/Passover. Festival of eight days, normally falling in April, commemorating the Exodus from Egypt in 1230 BCE, when the Almighty spared the Israelites the fate of the Egyptians by "passing over" their habitations.

Pesachdicker. Suitable for Pesach (colloquial).

Pidyan Ha' Ben. Ceremonial "redemption" of a first born baby son.

Purim. Historical Festival celebrating the deliverance of the Jewish People from their persecutors during the reign of the Persian King Ahasuerus in the fourth century BCE.

Rabbi. Lit. my teacher. Religious teacher and leader.

Rebbetzen. The wife of a Rabbi.

Revisionist. Those on the political right, inspired by Vladimir Jabotinsky and others, who before the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 sought to "revise" the Zionist programme by aspiring not only to a Jewish National Home as envisaged in the Balfour Declaration of November 1917 but to its status as a sovereign state rather than, for example, a British colony, mandate or protectorate.

Rosh Chodesh. The first, or in some months the first two, days of each month in the Jewish calendar.

Rosh Hashanah/New Year. Two day festival normally falling in September at the commencement of the Jewish New Year and symbolising new beginnings.

Schochet. Person who kills animals for food in the manner prescribed by Jewish Law.

Seder (pl. Sedarim). Service held in the home on the first two evenings of Pesach. Observed to some degree by many Jews even if they do not observe very much more. To those on active service, a memory of home. Chaplains and others always struggled to create some form, however incomplete, of Seder service.

Sedra (also Parsha). The weekly portion of the Torah read on Shabbat in the synagogue.

Sefer Torah (pl. Sifrei Torah). Scroll of the Law. Parchment on which is written the Torah, being the Five Books of Moses. The parchment is attached at each end to a roller. When closed, it is protected by a cover of fabric or in some communities of wood or metal, and is of some size and weight. Sections are read in the synagogue on Sabbaths, Festivals and Monday and Thursday mornings.

Selichot. Penitential Prayers, recited during the Yomim Noraim.

Semichah. Ordination as a Rabbi.

Sephardi (pl. Sephardim). Jews with a heritage in Spain and Portugal.

Shabbat/Shabbos/Sabbath. Falling on Saturdays, and like all Jewish days beginning in the evening, and thus on Friday evening, a day representing the seventh day or era in the creation cycle, upon which the Almighty refrained from creative activity, as therefore do observant Jews.

Shacharit. The daily morning service.

Shai. Welfare package prepared in the Land of Israel, sometimes by children, for Jewish soldiers, comprising food, letters, etc.

Shalom. Lit. Peace. Farewell (including on tombstones).

Shamas. A person with the task of organising the services in a synagogue.

Shavuot. Festival of two days, sometimes referred to as Pentecost, marking the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai in 1230 BCE. Falls seven weeks from the start of Pesach, normally in June.

Shema. A core declaration in Judaism of faith, beginning Shema Yisrael, lit. Listen, Israel. In a Jew's final moments, a last prayer.

Shemini Atzeret. Lit. Eighth Day of Assembly. One day festival falling immediately after the festival of Succot.

Shiva. Initial period of mourning of seven days for a deceased person.

Shofar. A ram's horn, blown into by the Baal Tokeah in order to sound sequences of notes in the synagogue during the Yomim Noraim services.

Shool/Shul. Synagogue.

Siddur. Prayer book for Sabbaths and weekdays.

Simchat Torah. Lit. Rejoicing of the Law. One day festival falling immediately after Shemini Atzeret, celebrating the joy of the Torah and its way of life.

Succot/Tabernacles. Festival of seven days commencing five days after Yom Kippur, normally in September/October, in which Jews build a temporary booth or “succah” and as far as possible live in it.

Tahara. Ritual cleansing of a body before burial.

Tallit (pl. Tallesim). Shawl worn by Jewish males in prayer.

Tefillin/Phylacteries. Boxes containing Torah texts worn by Jewish adult males on their forehead and upper arm during the weekday morning service.

Tisha b’Av. Lit. the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av. Fast day marking the destruction of both of the Temples in Biblical Israel and numerous other tragedies in Jewish history (including e.g. the outbreak of the First World War in 1914).

Torah, lit. instruction. Various layers of meaning, of which the most straightforward is the Five Books of Moses or Pentateuch.

Town Major. A military rank conferring overall responsibility for off duty troops in a specific area behind the lines.

Treifa. Lit. torn. Meat from an animal which is forbidden to Jews for consumption, or meat from a permitted animal which has not been killed in the prescribed manner and is therefore forbidden.

Tzitzit. The same as Arba Kanfoth, q.v.

United Synagogue. Known as “the U.S.” and founded in 1870, a body in Britain embracing a network of synagogues adhering to the British central and inclusivist Orthodox tradition of Judaism and to what is loosely termed Minhag Anglia. From the inception of Jewish chaplaincy most of the British chaplains have been United Synagogue ministers. The Visitation Committee was and remains one of its committees.

Yahrzeit. Anniversary in the Hebrew calendar of a death, observed in relation to family members by, amongst other things, reciting the Kaddish for Mourners in the presence of a minyan. Many Jews wish to recite Kaddish for a loved one even if they do not observe very much more, so assembling a minyan for that purpose is important to them.

Yekke (adj. Yekkish). Colloquial name for German Jews, derived from the short jackets which they wore.

Yeshiva (pl. Yeshivot). Institution of higher Jewish learning, studying predominantly the vast commentaries upon the Torah known as the Talmud (lit. teaching.)

Yiddish. Vernacular language of Jews in and from Eastern Europe. Essentially German written in Hebrew characters with additions from other Eastern European languages.

Yiddisher. Colloquial word for Jewish people, e.g. Yiddisher boys.

Yiddishkeit. The practice of traditional Jewish religious observance.

Yishuv. The term used until the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 for the Jewish community settled in the Land of Israel.

Yizkor. Lit. Remembrance. Memorial Service for the Dead.

Yomim Noraim (lit. Days of Awe) /High Holydays. The period of ten days beginning with Rosh Hashanah and ending with Yom Kippur. A period of especial holiness, during which the Almighty determines the fate of every Jew in the coming year, including "who shall live and who shall die", and how the latter shall meet their death. It is thus a period of especial reflection to those on active service, about their families and their mortality. Chaplains and others always struggled to hold some religious services, however incomplete, for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and to facilitate for those able to observe the fast on Yom Kippur (which was sometimes necessarily forbidden by the authorities on grounds of military efficacy) the breaking of the fast in the evening.

Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement. Festival falling on the tenth day of the Yomim Noraim of which Rosh Hashanah falls on the first and second. Begins in the evening with the Kol Nidrei service. Day of fasting and penitence. Observed to some degree by many Jews even if they do not observe very much more.

Yomtov. Lit. a good day. A festival day.

## 17. ABBREVIATIONS

A/C	Aircraftsman
AC1	Aircraftsman First Class
ACC	Army Chaplaincy Card on an individual chaplain, maintained at the Museum of Army Chaplaincy
ACG	Assistant Chaplain General
AChD	Army Chaplains' Department
ADC	Aide de Camp
AFJC	Armed Forces Jewish Community
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
AJEX	Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women
AJHS	Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal
AMPC	Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps
ARP	Air Raid Precautions
ATS	Auxiliary Territorial Services
BAOR	British Army of the Rhine
BCE	Before the Common Era (for dates, equivalent to BC)
BEF	British Expeditionary Force
BJBH	British Jewry Book of Honour
BLA	British Liberation Army
BMA	British Military Administration
CCS	Casualty Clearing Station
CE	Of the Common Era (for dates, equivalent to AD)
CG	Chaplain General
CF	Chaplain to the Forces
CMF	Central Mediterranean Force
CO	Commanding Officer
Col.	Colonel
Cpl.	Corporal

CWGC Commonwealth War Graves Commission  
 DACG Deputy Assistant Chaplain General  
 DCG Deputy Chaplain General  
 DSO Distinguished Service Order  
 EEF Egyptian Expeditionary Force  
 GHQ General Headquarters  
 GOC General Officer Commanding  
 GT General Transportation  
 HCF Honorary Chaplain to the Forces  
 HMAS His Majesty's Australian Ship  
 HMS His Majesty's Ship  
 HQ Headquarters  
 IEF Italian Expeditionary Force  
 IWGC Imperial War Graves Commission  
 IWM Imperial War Museum  
 JC Jewish Chronicle  
 JHC Jewish Hospitality Committee  
 JHS Jewish Historical Studies  
 JHSE Jewish Historical Society of England, The  
 JM Jewish Museum, London  
 JPSR Jewish Political Studies Review  
 JRACHD Journal of the Royal Army Chaplains' Department.

JW Jewish World  
 JWSC Jewish War Services Committee  
 LAC Leading Aircraftsman  
 LCC London County Council  
 LCI Landing Craft Infantry  
 LD Diary of Rev. Isaac Levy. LD1 is volume 1 of his diaries; so also LD2, LD3 and LD4.  
 LI L'Universe Israélite

LL Letter of Rev. Isaac Levy.

LMA London Metropolitan Archives

L of C Line of Communication / Control (army designated area)

Lt./Lieut. Lieutenant

Lt.-Col. Lieutenant-Colonel

MC Military Cross

MEF Middle East Force

MELF Middle East Land Forces

MiD Mentioned in Despatches

MT Motor Transportation; Movement and Transportation

NCO Non-Commissioned Officer

NJHC National Jewish Hospitality Committee for British and Allied Forces  
(sometimes without the word "National", JHC)

OBE Order of the British Empire

OC Officer Commanding

OCF Officiating Chaplain to the Forces

POW Prisoner of War

RA Royal Artillery

RAAF Royal Australian Air Force

RAC Royal Armoured Corps

RACHD Royal Army Chaplains' Department

RADC Royal Army Dental Corps

RAF Royal Air Force

RAFR Royal Air Force Reserve

RAFVR Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

RAMC Royal Army Medical Corps

RAOC Royal Army Ordnance Corps

RASC Royal Army Service Corps

RC Roman Catholic

RCOS Royal Corps of Signals

RE Royal Engineers



REME Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers  
Rev. Reverend  
RIASC Royal Indian Army Service Corps  
RN Royal Navy  
SCF Senior Chaplain to the Forces  
Sgt. Sergeant  
SJC Senior Jewish Chaplain  
SS Sailing Ship  
TA Territorial Army  
TD Territorial Decoration  
USHMM United States Holocaust Memorial Museum  
VAD Voluntary Aid Detachment  
V/C Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue.  
VC/1, VC/1A, VC/2 etc. The successive minute books of the Visitation Committee.  
WAAF Women's Auxiliary Air Force  
WT Water Tank